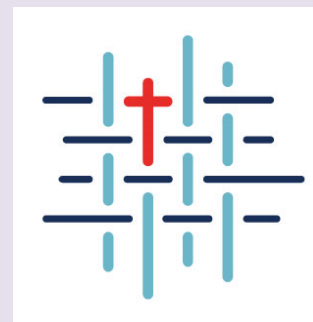


The Friendly Visitor December 2024

Newsletter of Grace Lutheran Church and Community



Grace Lutheran Church:

- *A community of faith, centered in worship, held in Grace, strengthened in love, sent forth in mission, in Jesus' name.*
- *Home of the Being New Spirituality Center.*

Pastor Michael Schmidt
Vicar Jesse Hershberger

In This Issue...

- 2 Staff contacts, Sympathies & Celebrations, Dessert Potluck, Martha/Lydia Circle
- 3 Vicar's Voice, Star Tree
- 4 Little Free Pantry Drive, Grant Applications
- 5 Holiday Decorating, Livia's Thank You, All Ages Project Photos & help request
- 6 Worship Volunteer needs, New Member Class Dates, a Thank You
- 7 Contemplative Corner
- 8 Being New Center Offerings, upcoming Centering Prayer Retreat
- 9 December worship dates & readings, Companion Congregation News
- 10 Nov. Council Highlights, Finance update
- 11 LSI Update, Hurricane Relief drive results, Stay Informed with Grace
- 12 Newsletter deadlines, Poinsettia Order Form

Office & Open Building Hours

9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Monday – Thursday
Or by appointment

Week of Thanksgiving

Open Monday & Tuesday 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Closed Wednesday – Friday

Sunday Schedule

9:00 a.m. Worship: In-person and Online
10:00 a.m. Fellowship & Coffee
10:15 a.m. Adult & Youth Education

Morning Prayer

Mondays & Fridays at 9:30 a.m.

@Gracelutherandm

Grace Lutheran Church
5201 Urbandale Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50310
515-276-6873

Advent Calendars

There is something special about Advent. There is a sense of anticipation in the air and there is a growing amount of light around houses and streets. Radio stations play festive music around the clock. There are many ways to mark the days until Christmas. Some are countdowns, whether by number, paper chains, etc. They mark the days until the birth of Christ. Others are Advent calendars that offer some sort of gift for every day leading up to Christmas: anything from chocolate to slime, Legos to makeup. By the time Christmas arrives, this array of small gifts becomes a collection of blessings.

This year, we are going to use a Jesse Tree in the Gathering Hall as our focus during Advent. What is a Jesse Tree? Well, it is a sort of congregational Advent calendar. Traditionally, on each day of Advent an ornament depicting a story from the Old Testament would be added to the tree. Each of these stories, when isolated, is just that — a story. But as the ornaments are collected on the tree, they become something far more: they become a collection of blessings and a beacon of hope. Each of these stories points to the faithfulness of God and gives us hope for the future. This visual representation of hope grows through the entire season, leading us to the manger scene and the birth of Jesus.

Instead of adding ornaments each day, we are inviting the congregation to share in decorating the tree each Sunday. We have journeyed through these Old Testament stories this fall, and these stories are signs of hope. There will be a prompt each week during worship followed by a time to either write or draw a response on the cards provided. Then, these cards will be hung on the tree after worship. Each week there will be signs of hope added to the tree. I look forward to taking the Advent journey with you. May we all become filled with hope by the witness of these Old Testament stories.

Pastor Mike



We hold the family of Fred Gee in our hearts and prayers. Fred was a longtime participant of Tuesday Bible Study.

Happy December Anniversary

- 1 Cindy and Ross Peeler
- 3 Katharine and Matt Radermacher
- 8 Becky and Tom Selander
- 14 Gregory and Darlis Honnold
- 26 Megan and Charles Reynolds

Lydia/Martha Circle Thursday, December 5

We will meet at 9:30 a.m. in Grace Hall. This is your invitation to join in for some fun and conversation. This will be our last meeting of 2024 and we would love to see you there.

We will be making cocoa mix packages for the Little Free Pantry.



Holiday Dessert Potluck Sunday, December 15 After Worship



We are getting excited about the now-annual Holiday Dessert Potluck! Will you bring one of your favorite holiday desserts to share? We've placed signup sheets on the bulletin board – add your name, the name of your treat, and how many servings you will have. We are also looking for people to help set up and clean up.

Grace Lutheran Church Staff
5201 Urbandale Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50310
515-276-6873



Pastor Michael Schmidt
mike@gracedm.org
Ext. 203

Vicar Jesse Hershberger
Jesse@gracedm.org
Ext. 204

Minister for Communications
Michelle Voelker
michelle@gracedm.org
Ext. 201

Bookkeeper
Mike Hilsabeck
mike.h@gracedm.org
Ext. 200

Office Assistant for Worship
Jessye Flannery
Jessica@gracedm.org

Organist
Richard Snyder
rich@gracedm.org

Custodian
Todd Haugen
1-515-520-4450

Happy December Birthday

- 1 Deanna Weber
- 2 Beverly Anderson
Christopher Barks
- 3 Martha Page
Ami Bradwell
James Jordahl
- 4 Carter Woodruff
- 5 Darlis Honnold
Aaron Brandsfield
- 11 Jamie Chamberlain
Burke Shiffler
Kari Dostalik
- 12 Evan Justice
- 13 Bradley Ashton
- 14 Anthony Garcia
Stacie Holst
- 15 Norman Iverson
- 18 Payton Lawson
Ember Brown
- 20 Shirley Shiffler
- 21 Chris Janson
- 22 Elizabeth Lewis
- 23 Nancy Crowfoot
Wayne Curry
Piper Hutton
- 24 Jon Rutter
Stuart Mitchell
Nicole Nelson
- 27 Barbara Berven
Christina Anderson
- 28 Samantha Schmidt
Courtney Vander Plaats
Sarah Chenoweth
- 29 Linda Rundle
Kevin Krause
- 30 Marion Nehmer
Drake Carney
- 31 Nicholas Best



Vicar's Voice

As we enter into December, Christmas traditions start to kick into high gear. Many will put up Christmas trees and begin to decorate their homes. My favorite Advent hymn, "People Look East," talks about how we prepare for Christ's birth. Here's the first verse:



*People, look east. The time is near
Of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
Trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the guest, is on the way.*

While this hymn talks about preparing our homes, Advent is also a time to think about how we prepare our hearts for a God who doesn't come as the kind of human we expect. Instead of coming as a powerful king on a throne, Jesus comes with little political power or social capital. Jesus, whose coming was long expected, still manages to show up in a surprising way.

My hope is that this Advent season will bring us opportunities to prepare our hearts along with our homes. Love, the guest, is on the way — but not always in the ways we expect. May we delight in the ways God shows up in unexpected ways for us this season.

Grace's Christmas Star Tree

Christmas will be here before long! Consider making someone's Christmas special — an adult from one of Mosaic's local group homes or a child from LSI's Early Development Program.

If you choose a star for an LSI child, you can either buy a \$25 Walmart gift card or you can send the money to church for us to buy it for you. If you buy a card, you can put it under the tree on Sunday mornings, drop it in the secure drop box by the office, deliver it to the church during business hours, or deliver it to Joie Gronert (515-210-2057 call or text) or Gail Petersen (515-707-5446 call or text). If you put it in the outside mailbox, a stamp must be included.

If you choose a star for a Mosaic person, aim for \$25 as a target amount to spend. When several items are suggested, choose the item(s) you want to give. If you choose a star and find you are unable to shop, let us know so we can shop for you. If you purchase a gift and you are unable to deliver it by Sunday, December 15, let us know so we can help. Unwrapped, please.

We are not doing the online option this year. If you want to participate but are unable to select a star, you may pay \$25 using Grace's online giving site (<https://gracedm.org/give-to-grace/>), mail a check to church, or make arrangements to drop off a check/cash when the church is open.

Questions? Call Joie or Gail. Happy shopping!
Please bring your gift(s) by Sunday, December 15th



December Little Free Pantry Request of the Month:

This month, we will collect personal items for the Little Free Pantry that can tolerate the colder temps: soap, diapers, feminine products, deodorant, and toothpaste. You can also provide donations online through the [GIVE](#) page or check payable to Grace Lutheran Church with "Little Free Pantry" in the memo.

There is also an [Amazon Grace Wish List](#) available where items will be shipped directly to the church.

Thank you for your donations.



Little Free Pantry Drive

During the month of December, we are having a funding drive for our Little Free Pantry.

In 2019, the Little Free Pantry ("LFP") was erected to help with the rising food insecurity. In 2022, the LFP backstock room was created to have an inventory of food. On average, we have purchased \$923 on food and personal care items monthly this year. We have a team of volunteers who stock the LFP with 50+ items 1-2 times a day. The pantry provides sustenance for a growing need in the area where nearly 72% of students at the neighborhood elementary school qualify for "free & reduced lunch". Typically, the pantry is empty when the volunteers arrive to refill each day. On occasion, the volunteers get to meet some of the people using the pantry who take what they need to help supplement a meal for a day or two. We also know that there are residents in the neighborhood who regularly put food in the pantry.



We are asking for additional contributions during this holiday season to build up our funds for the Little Free Pantry. You can also provide donations online through the [GIVE](#) page* or by check payable to Grace Lutheran Church designated for "Little Free Pantry".

*If reading this in print, you can type this address into your browser window to donate:
<https://gracedm.org/give-to-grace/>

Grace Endowment Fund

Endowment grants are awarded each year to groups both inside and outside of Grace. A certain percentage of the funds given each year must be awarded to community groups outside of the Grace community, so please share and promote this opportunity widely.

Requests for specific, finite projects are preferred. The Endowment does not fund operational expenses.

Applications are due January 31, 2025. Additional details and examples of projects can be found on our website <https://gracedm.org/support-of-others/grace-endowment-fund/>



Holiday Decorating and Learning Opportunity!

Do you love decorating for Christmas? Do you know what Chrismons are and their meanings? Did you ever wonder what the Altar Guild does? The Altar Guild would like to invite you to join us on Saturday, December 21, at 10:00 a.m., to help decorate the large Christmas tree in the sanctuary and arrange our poinsettias. This is an opportunity to decorate, learn more about Chrismons and the Altar Guild, and enjoy some fellowship with us. Treats and coffee/juice will be available. We hope you will consider joining us! (HINT: The Altar Guild is not a secret society! 😊)



If you have any questions, please talk to an Altar Guild member: Sue Anderson, Jill Boesch, Kathy Bowermaster, Gail Peterson, Jenny Rehder, Jane Ridnour, Amy Schmelzer, Rita Stackhouse, or Carol Woodruff.

All-Ages Service Project Update

Thanks to all who participated in making Christmas gift bags for the homebound! If you are able to help deliver even one bag, please contact Cathy Watson or Jill Boesch. They will also be available for pick up after service on Sunday, December 1.

There will not be a December project. The January Service Project will be held on Sunday, January 5, and we will be making Fleece Hats for the Little Free Pantry!



Signing cards and gathering the treats!

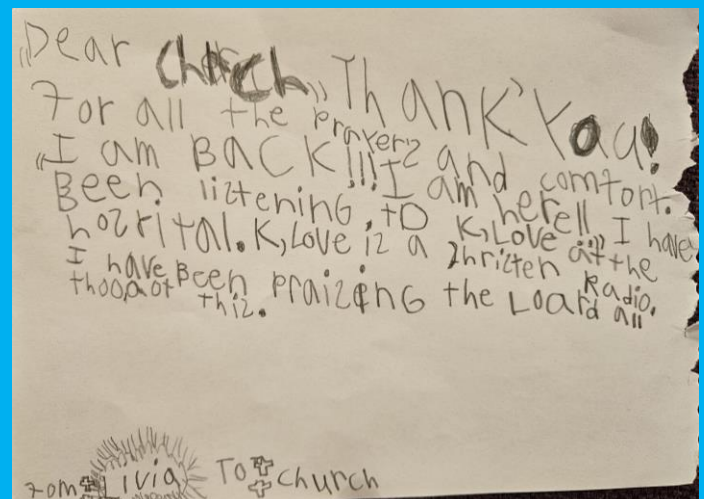


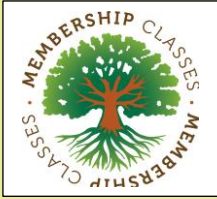
Vanna and Vanna — err, we mean Cathy and Jill — describing the process for this month's project.

Thank You from Livia

"Dear Church, Thank you! For all the prayers and comfort. I am Back!!! I am here!! I have been listening to KLove at the hospital. KLove is a Christian Radio. I have been praising the Lord all throughout this.

From, Livia"





New Member Class With Pastor Mike

If you are interested in becoming a member of Grace, or just want to ask questions about what it looks like to be a member of Grace, the first few opportunities in 2025 will be held on Sunday, January 5, and Sunday, February 23.

Call the office to R.S.V.P, or simply meet Pastor Mike in the office after worship on either of those dates. If neither of those dates works with your schedule, please contact Pastor Mike: he is more than happy to schedule a time to meet. You can reach him at Mike@gracedm.org or 515-276-6873.

Worship Volunteers

If you're still unsure or would like more details, please reach out to Vicar Jesse, or Pastor Mike – they'll be happy to answer your questions. Find the signup at the link <https://volunteersignup.org/3TKR7?classic>. You may also sign up on the paper copy in the Gathering Hall.

December needs

- December 1: Greeter, Communion Assistant,
- December 8: Greeter, Lector, Communion Assistant, Coffee/Donut Server
- December 15: Greeter, Lector, Communion Assistant,
 - 3 Coffee/Donut Servers to help set up for the Holiday Dessert Buffet!
- December 22: Greeter, Lector, Communion Assistant, Coffee/Donut Server
- Christmas Eve Worship 5:00 p.m. 2 Greeters, Lector, 4 Communion Assistants
- Christmas Eve Worship 9:00 p.m. 2 Greeters, Lector, 1 Communion Assistant
- Christmas Day Worship 10:00 a.m. Greeter, Lector, Communion Assistant
- Lessons and Carols December 29: Greeter, 3 Lectors, Coffee/Donut Server

Greeters: Be present in the entryway or Gathering Hall, smile, and welcome people!

Lectors: Read the week's readings and Psalm from the Ambo. If you have issues with stairs we can work around that too – just ask! Please start by signing up for just one Sunday per month – you are welcome to lector more often if openings remain, we just ask that you initially leave spots open for others who enjoy reading.

Communion assistants –Serve the wine or grape juice during communion. You may sit with your family before and after communion.

Coffee and Donut Servers; One or two people, or a family/group. Arrive before worship to start a pot of coffee in the Gathering Hall Kitchenette where you will find directions. Retrieve the box of donut holes from the kitchen. Start a carafe of decaf coffee brewing. After Communion head to the kitchenette, start a pot of hot water for tea, and set out the coffee, juice (found in the kitchenette fridge), cups, tea bags, donuts/tongs, and napkins. Socialize, refill any items if needed, clean up after any education offerings you would like to attend.



Dear Pastor Mike

Thank you so much for the continued support from you and everyone at the church! I always feel most blessed by those who quietly go about the business of serving and am truly humbled by your help. I really enjoyed my visit!

Kellie Markey
Dorothy's House

Everyday Mystics

I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one – I in them and you in me – so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

John 17: 20-24

There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to one hope at your calling one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 4: 4-6



Mysticism, as Ruth Burrows defines it, "...is being touched by God in a way that's beyond words, imagination, and feeling." Mysticism is not knowing God through a belief, creed, or thoughts about who God is. Mysticism is an inner experience of God in the way that Jesus and Paul pointed to in the above scripture passages. A mystical experience is having a sense of being in union with God and all that is around you. According to Richard Rohr, Franciscan priest and everyday mystic, mysticism simply means "*experiential knowledge of spiritual things*, in contrast to book knowledge, secondhand knowledge, or even church knowledge."

Throughout millennia, the well-known mystics have taught that all people are mystics having mystical experiences. To be aware of them embodying them as Truth from God is to acknowledge oneself as an "everyday mystic." The scripture verses above point to people being hardwired for unity experiences. It is humankind's birthright to know God as "above all and through all and in all." It is humankind's birthright, having been formed in the image of God, to know God in oneself.

Much of organized religion has discouraged people from attending to the mystical path by teaching to trust only outer authority, Scripture, various kinds of experts, or tradition, instead of teaching people to attend to and value inner experiences.

What kinds of things can bring about a mystical experience? Anything that takes us beyond our ego, wounds, obsessions, and powerful social pressures, anything that helps us touch who we really are, united with God in Christ, prompting us to want to be a better person. It might be a book, the beauty of nature, holding a baby, seeing a child crying or an animal wounded or the face of someone suffering. It might be an intense feeling prompted by an expression of love, the desire to bless someone, express genuine contrition, or share in the suffering and helplessness of another person.

Mystical experiences are prompted by things that cause momentarily letting go of one's self-identity to enter into a sense of being part of something larger. Mystics have an embodied sense of interconnectedness that helps them know in the core of their being that all creation is One in the body of Christ. Jesus pointed to this Oneness of Being as recorded in Matthew 25:

"Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me... For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me...' They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'"

Everyday mystics are people who commune with the presence of God. They receive guidance through visions, voices, and dreams. They commit themselves to living for God rather than for themselves. Their vision for life is larger and more expansive. They know in the depths of their being that they are alive for a reason, a purpose that will benefit human spirits they may never meet.

Being New Spirituality Center

We believe that contemplative insight and practice are key to the transformation of our spirits, touching that deep place of heart and of being that lives in each of us, whether we are part of a faith tradition or not. We are a resource for Central Iowa, creating events to which all are welcome, as well as opening space for offerings that others bring.

There is no fee for the offerings that come from the center. Donations to cover our expenses are thus received with special gratitude! There is a basket in the Center. Checks may be made out to Grace Lutheran Church with Being New in the memo line. You may also donate online through the church's website. Follow this link and choose Being New from the drop-down menu: https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2854737

The Center is located in the lower level of Grace Lutheran Church.



Preparing Hearts by Praying the Hours with Henri Nouwen

*Advent Centering Prayer Retreat, Saturday, December 7, 2024,
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Sponsored by Contemplative Outreach of Central Iowa, hosted by the
Being New Spirituality Center at Grace Lutheran Church*

Centering Prayer sits will be scheduled around the hours of 9:00 a.m., noon, and 3:00 p.m. The hours between will be set aside for the Contemplative activities of chanting, lectio divina, reading, and art.

Registration is \$40.00 at the door and includes lunch
Register: honsey.julie@gmail.com

Ongoing Offerings

SoulCollage® is offered on the **first and third Mondays each month at 6:30 p.m.** The fee is \$15.00 to cover supplies and materials. Please contact Deb Richards for more information (yobel49@yahoo.com).

Energy and Sound Healing Monthly Gatherings Come bask in a loving space through crystal tuning bowls and Reiki healing energy, **6:30 p.m. the second Monday of each month.** Contact Julie Good at juliegood03@yahoo.com or 515-306-4864 so she can plan for your presence. Instead of a fee, participants are invited to make a donation to Being New Center.

Drop-In Sessions on the first and third Wednesdays of each month at 10:00 a.m. During these informal gatherings we will watch and discuss a video, a presentation, or whatever seems relevant. Some will be offered as hybrid gatherings, in person as well as on zoom. Let us know if you have something you would like to offer.

Looking ahead

An Introduction to a Wisdom Way of Knowing: A Wisdom Practices Series

Are you new to spiritual practices and would like to become more familiar with them? Are you at home with such practices and appreciate joining with others in the sacred space we create in practicing together? Check out the link above. We are in conversation with the presenters of this series about gathering a group to experience this online retreat together, perhaps at a discounted fee. Sessions are January 18, January 25, & February 1, 2025, 11:30am-2:30pm. Is this something that might interest you? Contact Joan Fumetti, fumetti.j@gmail.com. If enough people are interested we will work out the details. The presenters are well known to us and we would be delighted to have you come to know them as well.

December in Worship

If you are someone who likes to ponder the texts in advance, or if you are signed up to lector in the coming month, we've provided a short summary of each week's readings as well as the specific verses. If you are contemplating being a lector, we encourage you to sign up online, on the clipboard in the Gathering Hall, or by calling the office.

December 1: Daniel 6:6-27

As a result of breaking King Darius' decree by praying to God, Daniel is thrown into a lion's den. But he is protected by God's angel who shuts the mouths of the lions and proves Daniel's hope in God is not in vain.

December 8: Joel 2:12-13, 28-29

Reminding the Israelites of the goodness of God, Joel called his people to genuine repentance to which God responded with the revelation of the Day of the Lord when God's Spirit would fill all people.

December 15: Isaiah 61:1-11

The anointed one who is sent by God will proclaim good news to all who have been crushed and oppressed. Because of God's faithfulness and righteousness, there will be restoration and renewal among the people of God.

December 22: Luke 1:26-56

Elizabeth, John's mother, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, are two women filled with the Holy Spirit and with faith. In Elizabeth's inspired greeting and Mary's song of praise we hear of a saving God who remembers, scatters, lifts up, and fulfills all things.

December 24: Luke 2:1-20 worship at 5 p.m. and 9 p.m.

God's greatest gift comes as a baby in a manger. Angels announce the "good news of great joy" and proclaim God's blessing of peace.

December 25: Luke 2:8-20 Worship at 10 a.m.

The angel of the Lord proclaims the birth of the Messiah to the shepherds in the fields, who then go on to share the good news with others after meeting Jesus in Bethlehem

December 29: Annual Lessons and Carols worship service

News from our Companion Congregation in Msindo, Tanzania

We received sad news from Pastor John Msuya, Msindo, Tanzania. Our good friend, Pastor Ombeni Mbaga died two weeks ago. He would have been 70 last week.

When our Companion Congregation Committee was active, Pastor Ombeni and his wife Navonne, visited us for several weeks and stayed in homes of members of the congregation. We had a group who went to visit Msindo and Mararo and stayed with Pastor Ombeni and in homes of their members. We feel blessed to have had a long friendship. While visiting us, he had an emergency appendectomy and a stroke after his return. The last time I spoke to Pastor Ombeni, he said he would dearly love to visit us again. I regret that it wasn't possible.

We have discussed starting up our Committee again and have had some interest. If you would like to be part of it, contact the office or come to a meeting in January.

Mary Freimuth Helt



Pastor Ombeni Mbaga

Grace Congregational Council Highlights, November 19, 2024

1. Call to order at 6:03 P.M. Dinner provided by Pastor Mike.
2. Adoption of Agenda - Jenny moved, Mike seconded, agenda approved.
3. Devotions by Pastor Mike – Genesis Ch. 11-12 - The blessing of Abram.
4. Approval of Minutes - Carter moved, Brian seconded, minutes approved.
5. “Ideas that will get you fired:” Have an outside vendor add some electric charging stations to the parking lot.
6. Staff Reports – Records room organization is in progress, will probably need to order some shelving.
7. Finance Report – YTD favorable finances to budget of \$6951. Jenny moved to accept the financial report, Carter seconded, motion approved.
8. Unfinished Business
 - a. Water Issues update – Initial excavation work started around the main entrance on Nov 19 and the water is flowing again with a new “Y”. Additional cleanouts may be added. May need to run downspout extenders on North side.
 - b. Mold Mitigation/Removal update – Mold mitigation started Nov 19 and will finish Nov 20 with company picking up the equipment.
 - c. Stewardship Update – Pledges are still coming in.
 - d. Maintenance budget and Property Team updates – Reviewing the “to do” lists and organizing them by inhouse vs. outside vendors.
 - e. Nominating Committee Update – Several individuals have agreed to be nominated for the open council positions in 2025.
 - f. Mission Action Fund matching funds for Lutheran Disaster Relief. Total \$13,030 donated to Lutheran Disaster Relief.
9. New Business
 - a. Little Free Pantry special ask for between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Continue getting the word out about supporting the LFP with funds and food.
10. Adjournment

2024 Congregational Council Members

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

Term Ends 2026: Valerie Culp, Greg Boeschen

Term Ends 2027: Tom McCleary, Linda Moravec, Brian Gerling, Stuart Mitchell

Exec Team:

President: Greg Boeschen Vice President: Tom McCleary
Secretary: Jenny Rehder At-Large Member: Kevin Drury

Finance Report – Oct Results

Financial results for October YTD are as follows:

- Income – Actual \$371,982, Budget \$344,025, Prior Year \$317,503
- Expenses – Actual \$372,639, Budget \$351,633, Prior Year \$368,450
- Net activity – Actual (\$657), Budget (\$7,608), Prior Year (\$50,947)



Results are great! Thanks to everyone who has made this happen. Activity is \$7K ahead of budget, including \$32K of unbudgeted roof repair work. This is a significant (over \$50,000) improvement from last year.



National Adoption Month

November is National Adoption Month! Lutheran Services in Iowa has served adoptive and foster families for decades, helping to ensure every child has a safe and loving home. For over a year, we joined with Four Oaks Foster and Adoption Services to better serve the families of Iowa. As a subcontractor, we continue to train and support foster, adoptive, and kin families in the western

side of the state. Our team has served over 700 families through assistance during the licensing process and by providing on-going support and development in the past fiscal year.

To learn more about our Foster Care and Adoption services, please visit www.lsiowa.org/foster-care-adoption.

Donations to LSI Doubled!

Consider giving a gift to Lutheran Services in Iowa to support Iowans from all walks of life. Until the end of December, all donations will be doubled! A handful of generous donors agreed to match donations up to \$80,000. Increase your impact by donating today at LSIowa.org/donate.

You may be able to increase your gift even more! See if your employer has a matching gift program.

For more information, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI's Director of Philanthropy and Church Relations, at Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org or 563-676-2065.

Update on the October Hurricane Relief Drive for Lutheran Disaster Response

The total raised through Grace, including the match from the Mission Action Fund, was \$13,030.

LDR will use 100% of that money to help those suffering because of recent hurricanes.

To learn more about the situation and the ELCA's response:

- Sign up to receive Lutheran Disaster Response [alerts](#).
- Check the Lutheran Disaster Response [blog](#).

Stay informed!

Weekly enews: Sent every Tuesday with weekly updates, activity reminders, occasional community news. The Tuesday editions are also published on our public Facebook page. By signing up you will also receive other occasional emails – such as funeral notices and special requests – these are not published on our Facebook page. Sign up on our website home page www.gracedm.org – just scroll down until you see “Get the Good News”, enter your email, and press enter.

Optional: *If you have never received our Tuesday electronic newsletter, the office can sign you up. Because of anti-spam laws, the software requires us to enter your email address **and** zip code. You can email those to us or fill out one of the white pew cards on Sunday. If you have received the electronic newsletter in the past and have cancelled it – whether by accident or to pause while on vacation, etc., those same spam laws will not allow us to sign you up again. If this is the case, go to the website directions listed above, or come see one of us in the office.*

Website calendar: also at Gracedm.org – see times, meeting rooms for upcoming events, holiday worship times, whether a room you want to reserve is available. Click on the News and Events dropdown menu at www.gracedm.org

Newsletter Birthday and Anniversary Lists:

Do you want to see your name in the weekly announcements or the monthly newsletter? Call the office to let us know, and check that we have the correct dates on file.

Friendly Visitor Deadlines

Please note the next few months have earlier deadlines.

- Christmas mini issue: Deadline Friday, December 13
- January – no newsletter as we prepare for Annual Meeting
- February 2025: Deadline Monday, January 20

SPONSOR A POINSETTIA

We invite you to purchase a poinsettia in honor or memory of loved ones to decorate the sanctuary for the 2024 Christmas season. The cost is **\$16.00**, and you will be able to pick up your poinsettia after Christmas.

Please return this form to the church office (mail slot by the office door), mail it to church or drop it in the offering plate. Or you can fill out the online order form here: <https://volunteersignup.org/LCBKX>
You may pay using Grace's online giving site or include payment with this form.

Order deadline: Sunday, December 8

Your name: _____

Email address: _____

Phone number: _____

Please fill this out exactly the way you'd like it printed in the bulletin insert:

Given by:

In memory of: (optional)

OR

In honor of: (optional)

Order deadline: December 8

Thank you!