

Grace Notes

A monthly publication of Grace Lutheran Church

December
2015



A Message from Pastor Aanonson:

On Sunday, November 29, we began a new church year. We are now in the first season of that new year, the season of Advent. Advent is a different season. Advent is a word that means “coming.” During this season we celebrate the three-fold coming of our Lord. We begin Advent by celebrating the coming of our Lord at the end of all time. Now, that does seem peculiar. We just finished the old year by highlighting the coming of our Lord at the end of all time. We bring in the new year by continuing that theme. In other words we begin the story of our Lord by telling the end of the story. Even before we celebrate His resurrection, even before we celebrate His presence among us through the Church we remember His promise to come again at the end of all time. So the first coming that we celebrate in Advent is His future coming. We begin the story by telling the end of the story. Just like many people who begin reading a mystery book by reading the end of the story first so that they know how the story ends, we do the same with the story of our Lord. Before we begin the story we know the end of the story. We know that the story ends in Christ. We know that our story ends in Christ. Thus, the future coming of our Lord is a story of comfort. Christ is coming again; that is the good news.

We then move on from the future coming of Christ by remembering and celebrating the coming Christ in the present. Christ comes to us every day through the Word, the water, the bread and the wine. In the reading, hearing, and the proclamation of God’s Word we meet our Lord. In the Word and water of Holy Baptism we meet our Lord. In the Word and the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper we meet our Lord as we eat His body and drink His blood. Christ is continually coming to us. Christ is continually with us. As we

go about our daily life we are reminded that Christ is not only coming again, but also that through His gifts of Word and Sacraments He is presently with us.

Finally, on the last Sunday of Advent we will be especially cognizant of the past coming of our Lord, which is also the first coming of our Lord, the coming of our Lord as a baby in a manger in Bethlehem. I know that we always want to celebrate Advent as preparing for Christmas. In doing so we impoverish ourselves by missing so much that Advent offers us. We best celebrate the coming of Christmas by fully celebrating Advent and coming to an understanding of the three-fold coming of Christ. The time to celebrate Christmas is during the twelve days of Christmas (In other words, maybe the Christmas tree should not be tossed out on the curb by Christmas Day afternoon, as I have seen so often). The Christmas season ends on January 6, the Day of Epiphany, which in some ways is a continuation of the season of Christmas.

The theme of Advent is hope. And why do we have hope? Because Christ came to us, is coming to us, and will come to us. Thus, in all circumstances of life, we are people of hope. So, we begin the peculiar season of Advent. We celebrate the past, present, and future coming of our Lord, only in reverse order. We live in the comfort and hope of knowing that the story ends in Christ, that we are in Christ, and that God came to us to live among us in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. What a rich season! Advent is the fullness of the proclamation of the Gospel. "Christ is here. Christ is coming. Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again!" "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus, Come quickly!"

May each of you have a Blessed Advent and Christmas!

David A. Aanonson, Interim Pastor

<p style="text-align: center;">Grace Lutheran Church Council Actions and Highlights – November 19, 2015</p>

MISSION: God’s purpose for Grace Lutheran Church is for us to be servant leaders in mission by loving and inspiring all people to experience the transforming grace of a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.

<u>MEMBERS PRESENT:</u>	Pr. Aanonson	Don Ager	Ramona Allenbaugh
	Mike Allenbaugh	Cindy Edgmond	Jim Edgmond
	JoAnne Fisher	Connor Lawhead	Shirlee Staley
	Kim Thompson		

MEMBERS EXECUSED: John Simmons

OPENING PRAYER by Don Ager

HAPPY TIME PRESCHOOL OF MUSCATINE:

The Board of Directors of Happy Time Preschool of Muscatine (HTPM) requested they attend the November Council meeting to discuss the 2016-2017 rent; a plumbing bill; and classroom issues.

- The Council was notified that in September and October some of their classrooms had been entered after school hours. HTPM discovered that their classrooms were in disarray and supplies had been strewn about the room. HTPM was informed that GLC will contact the other organizations/people who use the same classrooms to respect the placement of HTPM's property and return the room to its original setting after usage.
- HTPM requested a rent DECREASE for the 2016-2017 school year due to decreased student enrollment and state funding. Council asked HTPM to submit a proposed rental agreement for the December council meeting keeping in mind it will be negotiable.
- Council also asked HTPM to submit ideas/options as to how they could become part of the mission at GLC.
- A plumbing bill of \$69 was submitted and approved for payment by GLC.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING:

- Council approved the date and time of the 2016 Congregational meeting to be **Sunday, January 24, 2016, at 9:30 a.m. between services.** This time slot will limit the meeting to one hour. Items for the agenda must be submitted to the church office, Don Ager, Mike Allenbaugh, or JoAnne Fisher on or before January 10, 2016, as the agenda needs to be publicized 10 days prior to the meeting.

TASK FORCE:

- Council approved the formation of a Task Force, in conjunction with the Nominating Committee, and the present Treasurer, to separate the current financial duties between a Treasurer and a Bookkeeper. Briefly, the next Treasurer would be a Council/Executive Committee member. The Bookkeeper, who duties would include, but not limited to, keeping the church books, filing taxes, payroll, etc., would be appointed by Council and supervised by the Treasurer. The Bookkeeper would not be a Council member.

GIFTS AND MEMORIAL LOAN:

- Council approved transferring \$8,800 from the General Fund to the Gifts & Memorial fund to pay off the loan that was necessary to meet expenses earlier in the year.

SOUND SYSTEM:

- Council approved allowing Ben Houseman to oversee the maintenance of the present VGA/Sound System.

ELECTRONIC GIVING:

- Year-to-date electronic giving is now up to \$5,600.

MEETING ADJOURNED 7:55 p.m. (One hour twenty-five minutes)



Merry Christmas from LSI

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” – John 1:5

As Christmas approaches, we give thanks for you! Every day, as a ministry partner of LSI, you help bring the light of Christ to others.

At LSI, we know many people experiencing deep darkness. We know adults with disabilities who have no caring family presence in their lives. We know families in Des Moines who spent twenty years living in refugee camps and are finally regaining some hope for the future. We know teens who are aging out of the foster care system and fear they will never belong to anyone or have a family to love them.

LSI’s work is Christmas work, shining love, compassion and light in places of darkness, despair, abuse, neglect, addiction and crisis. We could not do this important work without you, and we are so grateful.

Wishing you a blessed and merry Christmas from LSI!

LSI is proud to be an affiliated social ministry organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Learn more at www.LSIowa.org and www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa.

Monique Finds A Place for Hope

On a rainy morning, the radiant laughter and smiles of two young sisters fill the room.

“My daughters are very energetic,” said their mom Monique, with a tired smile.

Monique began partnering with LSI’s HOPES (Healthy Opportunities for Parents to Experience Success) when her oldest daughter was just a couple months old.

“I was a first time mom and young. I was so scared I would be the worst mom possible,” Monique said.

When parents enroll in HOPES, they are connected with a family support worker who visits them in their home to offer parenting support, track child development and help families achieve their goals.

“The people at HOPES are my family. I couldn’t tell you where I’d be without them,” Monique said.

Monique was struggling to provide for herself without a high school diploma, adequate transportation or family support.

“She was kicked out of her house and has been on her own since she was a teen,” said Linda, an LSI supervisor. “She was forced to grow up really fast. She had to sink or swim, and she chose to swim.”

With support from LSI, Monique earned her GED and went immediately into CNA (certified nursing assistant) classes. Today, Monique needs less support than she once did, but LSI is still there to provide a listening ear and guidance. Her family is now happy, healthy and thriving with optimism for the future.

“Our futures look very bright. My new goals are to go back to school, work on buying a house, and get my kids into a really good school. Because of LSI, my family will succeed in life.”

GLC Ministry of Literacy



December 3rd will be the last day of our fall session. We would like to thank everyone for the gifts of their time, snacks, monetary contributions and prayers. What a wonderful support system we have!

We look forward to seeing you for the spring session which begins February 2nd.

Ministry of Literacy Supervisory Committee

Fishes & Loaves by Carlin Lawhead

On Saturday, October 17th, GLC took it's turn in serving the “Loaves and Fishes” noon meal at the Muscatine Center For Strategic Action (MCSA). 63 hungry people were fed meatloaf, green beans, scalloped potatoes, bread, cookies, and milk. Volunteer workers included: Mike West, Bob and Cyndi Eagle, Stephanie and Brooklyn Ash, Kacie Eagle, Mico, Dreyden, and Davian Vallejo, Mateo Pena, Katie and Kylie Green, and Glen Barrington. Those who helped out with donations of cookies and bars included Deb Holliday, Shirlee Staley, and Katie Green. Thanks so much to all who donated their time, made monetary contributions, and/or baked to help out.

Angel Tree by Traci Lippelgoes



We need your help supporting 6 families in our community. There is an angel tree located in the hall outside the sanctuary. Please choose an ornament or two and PLEASE be sure to sign the sheet with the information asked for. Return the unwrapped gift with the ornament attached by **December 8th**. Thank you so much in advance for helping families who would otherwise have no gifts under their tree this Christmas season.

Recognizing Jesus



One of my favorite Christmas stories is about the old shoe cobbler who dreamed one Christmas Eve that Jesus would come to visit him the next day.

The dream was so real that he was convinced it would come true. So the next morning he got up & went out & cut green boughs & decorated his little cobbler shop & got all ready for Jesus to come & visit. He was so sure that Jesus was going to come that he just sat down & waited for Him.

The hours passed & Jesus didn't come. But an old man came. He came inside for a moment to get warm out of the winter cold. As the cobbler talked with him he noticed the holes in the old man's shoes, so he reached up on the shelf & got him a new pair of shoes. He made sure they fit & that his socks were dry & sent him on his way.

Still he waited. But Jesus didn't come. An old woman came. A woman who hadn't had a decent meal in two days. They sat & visited for a while, & then he prepared some food for her to eat. He gave her a nourishing meal & sent her on her way.

Then he sat down again to wait for Jesus. But Jesus still didn't come. Then he heard a little boy crying out in front of his shop. He went out & talked with the boy, & discovered that the boy had been separated from his parents & didn't know how to get home. So he put on his coat, took the boy by the hand & led him home.

When he came back to his little shoe shop it was almost dark & the streets were emptied of people. And then in a moment of despair he lifted his voice to heaven & said, "Oh Lord Jesus, why didn't you come?"

And then in a moment of silence he seemed to hear a voice saying, "Oh shoe cobbler, lift up your heart. I kept my word. Three times I knocked at your friendly door. Three times my shadow fell across your floor. I was the man with the bruised feet. I was the woman you gave to eat. I was the boy on the homeless street."

Jesus had come. The cobbler just didn't realize it.

Sunday School Christmas Program



The Christmas program will be held during the 10:45 a.m. service on December 13th. Please mark your calendar and plan on attending.

Grace Nite Out

The next Grace Nite Out is scheduled for Sunday January 10th, at 5:00 p.m. at Boonies. We hope that everyone attends so we can show Boonies what support we have for the activity.

Anniversaries and Birthdays

Please save the next page to use for your prayer list. Pray for each person on their birthday and anniversary. By the end of the year, you would have prayed for everyone in the congregation. **If we have missed a birthday or anniversary or if corrections need to be made, please call the church office at 263-5680. Thank you.**

December Anniversaries

Happy
Anniversary

Robert & Cynthia Eagle	12-10	Rick & Kelly Gardner	12-22
Keith & Anita Lange	12-14	Art & Mary Hovick	12-22
Roger & Susan McConnaha	12-14	Eric & Teri Schlutz	12-22
Dennis & Sharon Ellefson	12-19		

December Birthdays

Ione Bachman	12/01	Marc Wilts	12/11	Carrie Zorich	12/21
Keith Hultquist	12/01	Kayla Sorensen	12/12	Kelsey Busch	12/23
Jodi Heth	12/02	Mary Sward	12/14	Lowden Gabriel	12/23
Randi Hidlebaugh	12/02	LeaAnn Logel	12/15	Lisa Mosier	12/25
Janice Lange	12/03	Angela Aird	12/17	Herman Theobald Jr.	12/26
James Melson	12/03	Rebecca Townsend	12/17	Helen Wulf	12/26
Jon Moravec	12/04	Cortnie McCleary	12/18	Kim Pantier	12/27
Chris Melson	12/05	Jayson Doering	12/19	Connie Stigge	12/27

★ HAPPY ★
BIRTHDAY!

Tony Green	12/06	Stacie Figg	12/19	Molly Bachman	12/28
Matthew Pohl	12/06	Justin Mathis	12/19	Victoria Busch	12/28
William Pohl	12/06	Laura Gedge	12/20	Marvin Krieger	12/29
Marsha Bennett	12/08	Stacy Mathias	12/20	Catelyn Pohl	12/29
James Howland	12/08	Jason Hepker	12/21	Daneice Hage	12/30
Emily Goddard	12/09	Jesse Houseman	12/21	Krystal Hidlebaugh	12/31
Aaron Moravec	12/10	Connie Kopf	12/21	Lynn Kelly	12/31
Hadley Schmidt	12/10	Debbie Rudolph	12/21	Kensley Paul	12/31

Church Announcements

- Grace Lutheran Church Christmas Eve Services are Thursday, December 24th, at 5:30 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.
- If you have not already done so, please check out the new look of the Church website at gracemuscatine.com.
- Updates for the Church Calendar can be found at gracemuscatine.com. Thank you.
- Please remember to provide the office with any name, address, email changes, or other pertinent information, so that we have correct information in our Shepherds Staff member file system and email system. Call the office at 263-5680 or email us at glc@machlink.com with changes. Thank you.

