

BLOSSOM IN THE BARREN WILDERNESS



*Behold a branch is growing
of lov'liest form and grace,
as prophets sung, foreknowing;
it springs from Jesse's race
and bears one little flow'r
in midst of coldest winter,
at deepest midnight hour.*

*Isaiah hath foretold it
in words of promise sure,
and Mary's arms enfold it,
a virgin meek and pure.
Thro' God's eternal will
this child to her is given
at midnight calm and still.*

*O savior, child of Mary,
who felt our human woe;
O savior, king of glory
who dost our weakness know,
bring us at length, we pray,
to the bright courts of heaven
and to the endless day.*

While the poinsettia seems to have become a preferred Christmas flower, German decorations use the symbol of the Christmas rose, a white five-petal flower frequently garnished with an evergreen branch and apples.

The Christmas rose is a true Christmas flower. It blooms in the depths of winter—a bright sign of hope in the wilderness.

Christ as the rose is a Scriptural theme (Song of Solomon 2:1). Martin Luther adopted it as his coat of arms and insignia. But why should a blossom in winter's wilderness with evergreen be linked to the birth of Christ?

First, remember John, the Baptist did most of his preaching in the wilderness. The greatest of the prophets ministered in uninhabited land, not some garden spot.

John had two tasks. The first was to baptize the sinless Son of God took His place with sinners and with those who needed God's love. Second, John came to prepare the people to recognize Jesus as God's Lamb, God's Servant, who would take away the world's sins.

The wilderness was a fitting place. Our first parents, Adam and Eve, were sent away from God's garden. In the garden flowers had bloomed and trees were always green, but Adam and Eve were sent where thorns grew among the grain, and all living things withered and died—a wasteland where labor became a struggle for life.

God's people, Israel, were led by God through a wilderness to be tested and purified before entering the promised Land. The wilderness is a powerful picture of existence outside God's garden of blessing, outside His church.

Into the wilderness God the Holy Spirit led Jesus to be tested. And it was there in the wilderness our Lord showed His power to overcome Satan's work with the Word of God. Even the worst of the wilderness where Satan roamed could not wilt the love and resolve of God to save us.

This Advent season John speaks to us in our wilderness to prepare our hearts for Jesus who came to bring us back again to His garden—His church—His paradise, freeing us from our sins.

Advent is the flowering of hope. Christ is come at winter.

During Advent and Christmas we are led, not by idle fairy tales to make-believe lands of sugar-plumbs, Santa's workshop, or the local mall where we may indulge our desires but never buy the one thing really needed.

No, we are comforted by the historical fact that God fulfilled His promises by sending Jesus Christ as the Savior of all people.

"I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys," said the Lord. And the church responds, "Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest is my lover...I delight to sit in his shade, and his fruit is sweet to my taste. He has taken me to the banquet hall, and his banner over me is love."

Sadly, for many, this season is not a time of Christian hope. Israel fell under that kind of discouragement. The people said, "We have no hope." Instead of flowers they saw weeds. They looked for pools of water but only saw mirage. They wanted friendly beasts but saw only lions. The wilderness for them had no road in or out.

But God send this word, "Say to those who are of a fearful heart, 'Be strong, fear not! Behold, your God will come. He will come and save you.'"

In the midst of "no hope" situations God comes to save. In the midst of winter blooms the Christmas rose, the sign of hope.

Is God far away? Does He know and see us? Does He care about us? Will He help us in our heartaches and deliver us from problems which seasonal glitter and tinsel only mask but cannot solve?

Yes! Advent is for true joy. Its message is: He comes! The Promised One came in human flesh at Bethlehem. The Promised One comes to us daily in Word and sacrament. And the Promised One will come at the end of time to raise us from the dead and take us to His eternal garden home.

Why does He come? Not to condemn, but to save, to removed the expulsion. He comes to bring us to His church.

Jesus came into a wilderness of fear and danger and tells us He removes our transgressions as far as the east is from the west.

From under drifts of doubt and chill, the unexpected happens. A bloom appears. The blossom opens. The garden is returned. And just as snow vanishes in the warmth of the morning sun, so our sins disappear when the Sun of Righteousness, rises in our world, when Christmas morning dawns and we rejoice in the beauty of God's greatest Gift.

God grant you a truly blessed Christmas. Pastor Reed

Please be mindful that with both Christmas Day and New Years Day falling on Sundays this year, we will following a one-service schedule for those days. This follow with our Christmas Day tradition of one Festival service at 9:00 a.m. The same will hold for New Years Day. Christmas Eve and New Years Eve services will occur as usual.. There will be no Wednesday services, Dec. 21 or 28



December Service Schedule

Advent Midweek services

7:00 pm. Nov. 30, Dec. 7 and 14

Children's Christmas Program

Sunday evening, Dec. 18, 7:00 p.m.

Christmas

Christmas Eve Family Service of Carols, 7:00 pm

Candlelight Holy Communion 11:00 pm.

Christmas Day, Dec. 25, 9:00 a.m. Eucharist

New Years

N.Y Eve Holy Communion 7:00 pm., Dec. 31

Sunday, New Years Day, (one service only) 9 am

Come – Meet the Nazarites

This Advent, the three mid-week Advent services will focus meditation upon the only three "Nazarites for life" found in Scripture:

Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist.

Each was a type of the Christ who was to come.

Worship with us Wednesdays and discover how these

Nazarites foreshadowed the Messiah

and instruct us for the coming of Christ to us.

<i>MEMBERS</i>	<i>NEW ADDRESS OR PHONE</i>
Ruth Roth	912 N. Scheurmann Rd., Apt. 21 Essexville, MI 48732-1845
Ben and Beth Jankens	995 Glen Haven Cir., Apt. 1 Petoskey, MI 49770 231-330-5540
Alicia Leffler	2951 Pheasant Run Drive. Apt. H Jackson, MI 49202
Chad Fournier	4534 Eastwood Dr., Auburn
<i>CHANGES</i>	<i>OFFICIAL ACTS</i>
Sean and Mary Doran family	Transferred to: St. Michael Lutheran Church Traverse City, Michigan

We have received a letter of appreciation from Jyoti Chakravartty who has safely returned to his home to India.

"I take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation for all that you have done to get me over to US and also for arranging for that Breakfast to share what the Lord is doing through us here in South Asia. God has been good to us, I was much encouraged by meeting with the folks in US. We are so glad that we now know that we are not alone in the battle.

Thanks for your prayers and support. By God's Grace we were able to get some funds to dig a bore well and some funds for publishing a sunday school material. Please continue to pray that the Lord will provide us remaining funds to complete the Know the Truth Resource Centre. We specially like to request you to pray for the water supply connection, we are facing some problems, we cant dig a well since we dont have sufficient place. However the municipal officer is giving us bit of problem, the normal water connection will cost \$ 72, but inorder to get that connection there needs to be quite a few clearance. However there is an another scheme of urgent connection which costs us nearly \$215. or less; the officer is inissting that we pay that money and get it. He is saying us that \$72 will costs months even a year.

Please pray with us that the Lord will over rule the situation. While I was away there was a devastating flood in our area. Many of the families in the slum lost quite a few things. with the genrous gifts I received I was able to help few families too. Well Pastor the need is immense here, I often feel Im in Battle, But I thank God each day for his Grace.and also for people like you standing with us in prayers. Thanks once again for your love and prayers. With warmest Christian greetings in His Grace.

— Jyoti



A CONVERSATION WITH BRIAN FOWLER, MASTER ORGAN BUILDER

Recently, the Grace organ console received a much needed upgrade made possible by special memorials and gifts for which we are most grateful. The following is a conversation with Brian Fowler whose Fowler Organ Company was very young when he first installed our Grace organ about thirty years ago. A member of the American Institute of Organ Builders, Brian takes seriously his profession of maintaining about 160 instruments throughout the mid-west. Between now and Christmas he will service about one hundred organs to be ready for the festival.

You were closely involved in securing a pipe organ for Grace years ago. What do you remember?

I remember going to Maple Heights, Ohio, with a group from here, taking an organ from a church there and then the congregation members building the house for it, and spending several weeks here on site installing the organ. One rather interesting thing was that a young man from Grace was helping me. Don Behmlander and I had a lot of fun working together and he subsequently helped me the next summer when we installed a new organ at Harbor Beach. Many happy memories.

As a Lutheran and an organ builder, where do you see the place of such an instrument in the life of the church?

The pipe organ has been involved in Christian worship since the 9th century. It evolved, particularly through the Lutheran Reformation, as a principal facilitator of worship. Luther saw hymn singing as something valuable and useful in terms of teaching. To have an instrument that can lead and support a large group of people was beneficial. Today we lament the fact there too few organists, but in Luther's time there were far fewer people capable of playing any musical instrument, so the organ was a very practical thing. The organ has a noble place in the church. It is an excellent leader of song. It *breathes* with people. It is a noble sound not associated, for the most part, with anything else but church. So, when you hear the sound of a pipe organ you think "church"—not beer garden, not the theater, but the church.

Should a pipe organ be considered an investment?

Every bit as much as the building. The pipe organ is going to last at least as long as the building and sometimes longer. Given care and attention it can last generations. There are organs in Europe around at the time of Luther and Bach still being played, so it is a long term investment. To be sure, pipe organs are costly but so are buildings, and we don't stop building buildings. We need a house for the Christian community of faith to gather for worship and the organ is appropriate to appoint that house.

Why should we take pride in this particular instrument which serves Grace congregation?

First of all, a lot of people from this parish made real sacrifices to make it happen. I don't suppose Grace is blessed with a lot of high rollers with vast incomes. People made sacrifices of their resources to put this instrument here. People from this congregation actually laid hands on it, carried and moved it, and sweat over doing that, so it's really not somebody coming from the outside and putting the organ in here, but it was actually the people of Grace assisting in doing so. Consequently, you have

far less cost in the instrument than if you went out and bought it brand new. The fact people helped take the organ out, helped installed it, and again when the sanctuary was renovated in 1986, and funded it, there is a sense of pride and ownership just as in the rest of the building.

It is part of your faithful expression. The church really needs to be that. We need to have a sense of ownership of our congregation, our parish, our place of worship and take honest pride—not arrogance—but honest pride in a blessing such as this.

Why was the present work on the console needed?

Twenty-five years ago, the mechanism we used, while it was a very good at the time, was purely mechanical. Every time you re-set stops or changed it, it placed wear on the mechanism. Over twenty-five years it began to wear out. The solid-state equipment we are using today provides so much more versatility. The former system could be set only one way. Now, each organist may have multiple memory levels. For example, if a musician is playing during Lent but practicing for Easter, all the stop settings can be programmed. You don't have to reset every time. It is also much more durable because it is not mechanical. It is electric in terms of moving the tabs but it is very simple. The part which is complex (the solid-state board) is only one piece of the puzzle and could actually be changed quickly if something catastrophic happened. So, it is a very effective system, a definite upgrade.

What longevity could be expected from our pipe organ?

This organ and its accoutrements was originally built in 1950, but we rebuilt it in 1986. There is no reason this organ can't continue to serve Grace for another century. It will probably need some renovation from time to time as various and sundry things wear like any other machinery or building. But it is completely rebuildable. It was engineered for that. It's kind of funny, we can buy parts for this pipe organ right off the shelf, parts which date to 1950. And we can buy parts for organs build in the 20s, teens, even the 1800s. So, the technology is certainly mature, and that give longevity. The worst thing that could happen to this organ would be a leaky roof—the absolute nemesis of pipe organs.

Martin Luther said, "Music is an outstanding gift of God and next to theology." Your special service to the church is very much in support of ministry. That must please you.

Sure, people have asked me, "What's the most fun part of your job?" Sometimes I say, there are two parts. One is providing the instrument. But the real grand part is to hear the organ thundering forth on a great Lutheran hymn and hear all those voices of the church shouting the praises of God. Our Lord has given us this glorious gift of music to clothe the message of Jesus Christ. It's an incredible feeling. In between is a lot of hard work, sweat, and some frustration to be sure, but it's incredible to realize your instruments are soothing people at funerals, inspiring God's people in the divine service, and offering all glory to God. It's both a responsibility and a joy...a real privilege.



Social Skills

Principal's Report

Contrary to popular belief, children do not learn social skills at school. They practice social skills at school, but they learn them at home. A teacher can observe, set rules for behavior, and guide children to better skills, but we cannot teach what is learned at home. At school, your child will come into contact with many different personalities. Children need to have skills that enable them to interact effectively with all types of people.

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."
1 Corinthians 13: 4 - 7

Learning social skills is learning how to love. God's love for us is perfectly unconditional. Because of God's love, because of Jesus' death and resurrection, because of the work of the Holy Spirit, we can and do love our children. The relationship you have with your child will be the primary factor in his or her social skill development. Unconditional love will create an emotionally healthy child; a child who is confident that the world will not come crashing down if things don't go perfectly. It is easy for us to understand that we are to love our children even when they sin. Certainly, we want to bring them to the point of repentance and forgiveness, and we assure them of our continual love. But unconditional love comes into play when we disappoint our children. They need to know that we still love them even if we aren't doing what they want us to do.

God's forgiveness is complete. He

promises to remember our sin no more. As parents, we cannot be perfect in forgiveness. It is easy to slip into Law mode when we parent. There are so many rules and so many ways for children to get around the rules. We must be ever vigilant in our quest to keep our children on the straight and narrow. And what is the Gospel that follows the Law? The ability to forgive is ours because Jesus died and rose again for us. God forgives us so we are then able to forgive each other. Children remember the rules and the consequences but they need to feel the forgiveness.

We are parents all the time. Our children learn from us all the time. It can be overwhelming to think that we have such an influence on our children, but it is also a blessing to know that we have this influence. God's plan is that we would have opportunities to shape these children and to help them grow in the love and knowledge of their Savior. This is His will and He stands ready to work with us in this endeavor.

Congratulations to our girls' volleyball team! They captured 4th place at the tournament held at Zion, B.C. on November 18th & 19th. Special thanks to our coaches Gail Koch and Sarah Schilb.

With winter approaching, there may be times when school needs to be closed for weather. Anytime that it is announced that Bay City Public Schools are closed for weather related problems, Grace will also be closed. If Grace alone needs to close, you will be contacted before 7:00 a.m. by phone.

If you have looked at our website recently, you will note many additional items at the school site. We have included a variety of pictures of students, sports and otherwise. We have posted the school calendar, the singing schedule, and the hot lunch work schedule. Also posted are present and past weekly memos and the weekly Journalism Club article. Our school secretary, Jan Dzurka has been working hard to improve her skills and she updates it regularly. If there are additional things that you would like

to see on it, contact her and we will see what we can do.

The Children's Bazaar, Hollyland Mall, will be on December 6th in the morning. Various area vendors will be offering a variety of Christmas gifts at a reasonable price. All items will sell for not more than \$5.00. Volunteers from the Ladies of Grace will wrap all gifts. Please, do not send checks with your children, sorry, but only cash is accepted by the vendors. Students from Trinity, Monitor, will also be here to shop.

Our second mid-quarter ends Friday, December 9. All students will receive their progress reports with the memo on December 13. They should be signed and returned to school.

The Children's Christmas Program will be held in the church on December 18th beginning at 7:00. The program will include all children of the congregation. The presentation is titled "The Trees of Christmas."

Classes will end at the completion of the regular school day on Wednesday, December 21 for the beginning of our Christmas Break. Classes resume on Tuesday, January 3, 2006. Bay City Public will not be in session that day, so alternative transportation will need to be provided.

On behalf of our students and faculty, may we wish you all the blessings of Christmas. Our Savior is born! May God's gift of salvation in Christ fill you with peace and joy as you witness His love and the greatest gift of all - Jesus!



Our volleyball team



Junior High Highlights

Algebra basically uses letters and other symbols to represent unknown numbers and applies arithmetical operations to them. Seventh grade math will soon begin a unit on algebra. They will work with algebraic expressions and equations. They are all looking forward to it and I know they can hardly wait. The eighth grade, well into algebra, continues to work with equations that have the variable on both sides. This also includes various challenging word problems. In our English language, there are eight kinds of words called parts of speech: verbs, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections. We will be studying them one at a time in separate units.

The first part of speech that we will work with is verbs and their uses. Studies of American history have brought us to the time when our government was first formed. We have started reading the U.S. Constitution in its entirety. Although this is a time consuming task, a complete reading and discussion is necessary to get a full understanding of our democratic form of government and how it works. The Constitution guarantees every citizen certain rights. Along with these rights comes the responsibility to preserve, protect, and defend them. Religion for the month of December will focus on all the preparations needed for our annual Christmas program presented December 18th titled "The Trees of Christmas."

5th & 6th Grade News

As November comes to a close I find myself in a thankful mood. Not just because of the holiday, but for the countless blessings felt during this year. First of all, I am thankful for my family. We have made many changes in the past few months that have brought us closer to one another and our heavenly Father. I'd be remiss if I forgot to extend a big thank you to Mrs. Connie Gengler for teaching the students during my absence. She took great care of the students and got things all "ship-shape" in our room. She even stayed to help with parent/teacher conferences that were conducted the first week of November. We appreciate all your dedication and hard-work Mrs. Gengler! Another huge note of appreciation goes out to all of you that supported my family during our recent adoption journey to China. Samantha is adjusting to life with us very well and loves all the gifts that were lovingly be-

December News

stowed on her at the shower on Sunday, November 20th. We were overwhelmed by your generosity and kindness. We feel so blessed to be a part of the Grace Lutheran School family. Finally, the Lord has continued to bless our classroom and we are striving to form a closer relationship with Him.

The students in the 5th & 6th grade class are studying the Old Testament this year, and are focused on the promises and trials of the children of Israel. We will begin our Advent devotions and prepare our hearts and minds for the coming Christmas season. The children enlisted the help of all classes in the collection of non-perishable items for the hungry in our area. They collected 4 boxes filled with canned goods that will be a blessing to people in need. In December we will sing carols at Plainview Senior Neighborhood, and enjoy fellowship with the residents there.

The Science curriculum is taking us on a voyage to discover our physical Earth. We have examined the tectonic plates and the formation of mountains around the world. The students are currently learning more about earthquakes; what causes them and how they are measured.

In Social Studies the children are focused on U.S. History. The European exploration and colonization of the Americas has our attention at the moment. We will look closely at the U.S. colonies and move toward the study of the Revolutionary War soon.

The Christmas program will be our focus in December. Please join us if you can on Sunday, December 18th at 7 p.m. for a memorable, inspiring look at the role of trees in our Christmas celebration. The students are working diligently on their parts and we'd love to see each of you at the performance!

- Mrs. VanSickle

A Day at the Apple Barn

Dear Family in Christ

As promised last month, I'd like to tell you all about our field trip to Leaman's Green Applebarn in Freeland. Our trip started out with a hay ride through the apple orchard. Afterward, our guide led us by foot through the orchard teaching us about the animals that



Morgan picking her apple.

live in the orchard, both the good and the bad. She also talked to us about the insects that are in the orchard and alternatives to spraying the trees with pesticides. Students were then shown how to properly pick an apple and could try it out. When all students had picked their apple, we were shown how the apples were washed and sorted. We selected a few more apples and made cider using an old

cider press. Next students posed for photos near the scarecrows and then made their way over to the corn maze. The maze was confusing and exhilarating, even the adults gave it a try. Once we had figured the maze out, it was time to let loose and burn some energy. Students darted over to the playground where they raced tractors, fed goats, slide down tube slides, and rang bells. After all that activity, it was time to replenish our bodies with cider and doughnuts. Yum! Finally we strolled inside where we created our very own apple bell, received a coloring book, and said our goodbyes. We piled back into our cars and rode back to school, where we enjoyed yet another treat, caramel apples, courtesy of Katrina Larsen. What a fun, educational, and satisfying day!

Reid and Travis



Leaman's
Green Applebarn



Morgan, Olivia, & Kaylee
making their
decorations

Student comments:

"It was a lot of fun on the hay ride. I liked the corn maze because it was a lot of fun to go through." – *Melissa Venix*

"I like the walk through the apple orchard." – *Bailey Heading*

"In the playground I like the bicycle track." – *Reid Robson*

I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday. Praise be to God, for all the blessings he has provided us! I wish you all the joy and happiness as we celebrate our Savior's birth this month. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Ms. Schroeder

K, 1 & 2

Even though we had to send our exciting science kit back, we are still having fun in school and learning. We have had many other new and exciting activities to interest us.

Parent/Teacher conferences were at the beginning of November. Miss Rudick met with all of our parents and told them that we were all doing very well in school. Some of us were a little nervous about receiving our report cards and our parents talking to Miss Rudick, but we found out we had nothing to worry about.

Mrs. Diehl brought in miniature pumpkins for us. We decorated one pumpkin as part of our Fall Festival



Showing off our turkey pumpkins!

party. We each made the second pumpkin into a turkey. It was very difficult to complete and took 2 days to finally fin-

ish! We worked hard on those pumpkins!!! Thank you for the pumpkins Mrs. Diehl!

We have now turned our attention to preparing for the Christmas Program. Even before Thanksgiving we were working on our songs and speaking parts for the program. We are looking forward to working with the preschool students from Sunday School too. We hope you will be able to come and join us on December 18th at 7:00 p.m.



Given in Memory

- Fred Horneber
By
Cliff & Jan Vennix
Ric & Linda Fletcher
Ron & Ann Balzer
Carol Roga
Gary & Deb Pyle
- Monica Adamczyk
By
John & Iris Dominowski



GRACE FAMILY CHRISTMAS POTLUCK

This year our Family Christmas Potluck will be held on Sunday, December 11 at 12:00 pm.

Our entire congregation is invited to join us for the potluck fellowship and fun. Please come and listen to the school bands as they perform a few songs for us. We will play games, and sing Christmas Carols. The Grace CPTL will provide the chicken and drinks. Families are asked to bring their own table service and a dish to pass (enough to serve at least 15). If your last name begins with A – F bring a cold salad, fruit or vegetable tray; G – L bring a main dish; M – Q bring a dessert, and R – Z bring a hot vegetable or hot potato dish.



Do You Have a Clue???

I know what I'm doing, and you know what you're doing, but what in the world are they doing? Do you ever get the feeling that you don't know what anybody's doing around Grace? Wouldn't it be great if we all knew what we were all doing!! Guess what? We can all be in the know and you can help make it happen! The Newsletter Committee wants our Newsletter to be filled with news about all the activities going on at Grace Lutheran. We know you are all busy with your activities, but how about sharing it with all of us. The newsletter staff is coming to find you! One of us will be contacting you soon to be our "Go To" Person for one of the groups you are active in at Grace. All we need is some information, once a month, for the Spotligher. You write or we'll write it.

Here's the catch. We need that info on Lynn's desk by the 20th of every month. We're going to put a reminder note in your mailbox the Sunday before the 20th to help jog your memory. Then if we don't hear from you, we'll call you.... but just once. So be considerate if your group doesn't have anything planned this month and let Lynn know. Then we'll stop bugging you! Thanks for all your help!!!!

Sports Update

Our students are up and running for our basketball season. Practices are going on at all times in our gym. The A team's first game is January 10.

Grizzly Sport T-Shirts and water bottles will be available for order soon.



Church and School Office Hours

For your convenience, the church office and school hours will be posted in the newsletter monthly and on the office door.

December Office Hours Church Office

Monday – Friday / 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM
Church Office Closed – Dec. 26 and Jan. 2

School Office

Monday – Friday / 8AM to Noon
School Office Closed – Dec. 23 to Jan. 2

E-Mail Addresses and Address Changes New Church Directory

During the week of Christmas, Lynn will be working on the New Church Directory. Please submit any new/change of address or email to her in writing.

Giving Tree

Grace will once again participate in the Giving Tree gifts program coordinated through Created for Caring. We have been assigned 18 households from this area for which we have agreed to purchase a general gift per adult and a general gift plus a clothing item for each child under 18. We are asking unwrapped gifts to be returned to Grace no later than Wed., Dec. 17. Created for Caring asks that we purchase one gift only per card, especially for the children as it can cause problems when one sibling receives more than another. Although some of the suggestions may sound a bit unusual to us, these items are what they themselves listed on the forms that we receive. Imagine asking for only “a candle” or “household cleaning supplies”. God has blessed us all richly – let us share our abundance with others.



Poinsettia's for Christmas

We will be decorating our altar area with poinsettias again this year. There are envelopes on the usher's desk if you can donate money toward the purchase of them. The poinsettia's cost \$16.00 each. We will accept any and all donations.



Ladies Christmas Party

All Women of Grace congregation are invited to attend the Annual Ladies of Grace Christmas dinner. This catered meal will be held on Tuesday, December 13, at 6:00 p. m. in the library here at Grace. The cost is \$10.00. A gift exchange of \$5.00-\$7.00 will take place only if you want to participate. Regardless, we encourage all to attend and join us in our Christmas fellowship. Reservations must be made by Saturday, December 10 to Rosie, 662-6120, or Sue, 662-7900..

From the Board

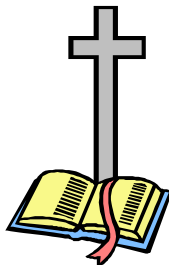
of Evangelism

The Board of Evangelism welcomes all to help deliver door hangers with a Christmas message on Saturday, December 3rd at 9 AM. Meet at the church and get your packet there. We will be concentrating on the East side of Auburn.

A Created for Caring tree will be in the narthex for gifts for needy Auburn area families. Please take a gift card and present the gift under the tree at Christmas.

We received a nice thank you from the Kenya Orphanage for our gift of \$260 from the VBS children's offerings.

We would like to have the ushers and/or greeter open the church doors as worshipers enter the church. It adds a friendly touch. We would welcome anyone who could help with the doors to come 15 minutes early and help.



KETRA – A Beneficial Tax Law

If you know fellow Lutheran Christians with a generous heart for supporting the ministries of the church, this information should be shared with them as soon as possible.

In September, President Bush signed into law the Katrina Emergency Tax Relief Act (KETRA). Although Hurricane Katrina and a desire to help charities that are assisting with relief efforts are behind this act, its provisions can benefit all charities. Because of KETRA, donors may contribute unlimited cash gifts to any charity or ministry between August 28, 2005, and December 31, 2005, and receive a full tax deduction. In fact, up to 100 percent of a donor's adjusted gross income may be tax deductible!

Any cash gift for any charitable purpose may qualify, including gifts to all LCMS ministries or public charities. LCMS ministries could include your own congregation; ministries within your District; an LCMS school, college, or seminary; an LCMS recognized service organization; and all LCMS national ministries, such as LCMS World Mission, LCMS World Relief/Human Care, Worldwide KFUO Radio, and the LCMS Joint Seminary Fund.

For individuals over the age of 59 ½, there may also be an opportunity to donate funds from an IRA or other qualified retirement plan and receive a full federal tax deduction. Additionally, gifts from investment annuities or other cash funds may be eligible for a full deduction.

We encourage you to contact your tax advisers on the details, particularly when planning to take a large withdrawal from a retirement account. Your personal tax adviser will be able to account for other related tax costs, such as a reduction in itemized deductions, as well as state and local taxes. (Please note that the information provided here is not a substitute for obtaining professional tax, legal, or financial advice. The services of a professional are recommended if advice is required.)

More detailed information and documentation about KETRA is available through the LCMS Foundation Web site at www.lcmsfoundation.org. Just click on “Katrina Emergency Tax Relief Act.”

This new law is in effect only for the 2005 tax year, so it is important to inform people as soon as possible. For more information, please call The LCMS Foundation at 1-800-325-7912.

Grace Lutheran Church and School
303 W. Ruth Street
Auburn, Michigan 48611

Rev. David H. Reed, Pastor
Mr. Peter Fredrich, Principal

NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. Postage
#19 PAID #19
Bulk Mail

Return Service Requested



December



December Birthdays & Anniversaries



Birthdays

3 Thomas Prah, 4 Kathryn Battle, Robert Krystosek, Drew Schmidt, Kerry Storey, 5 Margaret Barber, 6 James Feinauer, Bernard VanTol, James Webb, 8 Roy Hayward Jr, Russell Pickelman, Jacob Schmidt, Barbara Vennix, 9 Ruth Peil, 11 Loretta Friebe, Emily Gray, Chris Lewicki, 12 Aaron Bauer, Bethany Weiss, 13 Jordan Hakes, 16 Carol Bickham, 17 Anna Katenhus, Michael Lance, 18 Zachary Horneber, Ella Stieve, 20 Benjamin Jankens, Jessica Pyle, 21 Amy Bickham, Brian Keidel, Steven VanTol, 22 Ashly Kraatz, Emily Kraatz, Cindy Walter, 23 Kyle Rauschenberger, 24 Rita Reiss, Justin Varner, Ruth Anna Wegener, 26 Christine Bachman, Barbara Gonyea, Brian Keidel, Irene Taglauer, 27 Mary Korman, Tracy Storey, 28 Dallas Eichman, Cameron Morford, 31 Kaitlyn Peil

Anniversaries

5 Jeff & Barb Vennix, 10 Mark & Pam Horneber, Ron & Carol Mularz, Craig & Ashley Liberacki, 22 Mark & Doreen Hetzner, 28 Allen & Edie Ousterhout, 31 Elmer & Irene Taglauer

