

December
2007

GRACE SPOTLIGHTER

Dear Grace Family,

Of all I remember of childhood, the clearest memories center in Christmas. My mother baked what seemed to be dozens of different varieties of cookies which I then delivered around the neighborhood to shut-ins and neighbors.

We couldn't hang ornaments too low on our tree because the dog's tail would sweep a few each year onto the floor. The Christmas morning menu of sliced oranges, stollen, and sausage had to be the same each year.

Also, in Altadena, the town where I grew up in Southern California, we had Christmas Tree Lane. This was no ordinary street, mind you. Many years back someone planted a mile of Deodar trees, a variety of giant cedars which grow 250 feet tall. The lower canopy of branches are so broad that cars, two abreast, can drive the length of Santa Rosa Avenue underneath the "Christmas trees" on either side.

Each year the Deodars are decorated with huge colored lights, and thousands of visitors come each December night to drive down Christmas Tree Lane, just over from my house.

I treasure those days. Even now I hang a homely stocking which was mine back then. Just recalling some of those memories brings happiness as I'm sure your memories do for you.

What is it about Christmas that evokes so much in us? The tenderness. The warmth. The joy.

I'll tell you what it is.

Each revisit to the celebration discloses an exquisite wonderment. It wasn't just me and you who once were a child. Our Savior was born a child too, an infant under the twinkling stars. He not only came for us and to us – but as one of us!

Christmas is the sweet reminder that God's gracious gift of a child—the Divine Christ Child—connects us to everything which is precious and endures. The crimson color of a stocking may fade with years but mine has amazingly become more prized. Some of the Deodars yield each year to winter winds, but they are taller in my memory. Christ's birthday does not wane with years. Just the opposite. Christmas radiates a halo of happiness and peace which unfolds afresh with each new telling.

The baby is eternal [1 John 5:20]. Christ never lost his innocence or his gentleness for us. Our childhood is not a bygone phase but our present condition as God's sons and daughters. We are children whom our heavenly Father loves forever. We receive the kingdom of God as children [Mark 10:15]. And the reason why the aroma of cookies and pine needles, the luster of colored lights, and the gentle music of a lullaby still summon our hearts to sing is because Christ was born in Bethlehem. God gave to us His most precious gift, so princely and so bounteous, that every other delight and joy has followed.

Have a blessed Christmas Nativity, dear friends.

Pastor



SONGS AND SYMBOLS OF THE COMING SAVIOR

Advent is known, and yet not. Much more than a beautiful custom or lovely practice, to us Christians, Advent is the season of rejoicing always, in any and every place—the coming of Jesus for us, His birth in us by baptism, His approach to us daily in Word and Sacrament, and His final coming in judgment.

For the baptized there is something of the feeling of those Israelites who rejoiced at the thought that the Lord was coming to judge the earth, because He would "judge the world with righteousness, and the people with equity."

Even those, like many of us, who have been brought up in confessional churches may lack a historical knowledge of Advent and its deep significance.

Advent has an interesting history even though Advent as we observe it, doesn't go back to the beginning of the Christian era. It may come as a surprise that the date for the celebration of Christmas has not always been December 25. There was a time, for instance, when Christmas was celebrated, January 6 which we now mark as Epiphany.

The Church Year took form only gradually. So it is with Advent which for a long time now has been recognized as the beginning of the Church Year.

We rightly think of it today as the season for the preparation of Christmas. Four Sundays and their attendant weeks lead up to the Festival of Christ's Nativity.

There is no evidence of an established celebration of Christmas on December 25 until the fourth century. The season of Advent, as such, is not mentioned until about the seventh century.

(continue page 2)

The practice is said to have originated in Gaul (western Europe). A synod at Saragossa, Spain, in 380 A.D. prescribed a penitential preparation for Christmas when everyone was to attend worship daily, and no one was to come to church with bare feet.

In a small church council at Tours about A.D. 567 there was the indication of a fast for monks in December, to be kept every day. This might be regarded as the first unquestionable reference to Advent. A few years later, a directive is mentioned applying to everyone, but was less rigorous regarding the number of days on which the fast was to be observed.

There is in Advent an element of the penitential. There was a time when weddings were not solemnized during Advent. The ecclesiastical color is violet, the same as Lent. In some Advent hymns we find lines like: "Midnight's solemn hour is tolling," or "Wakened by the solemn warning, let the earth-bound soul arise."

But the tone of Advent has grown from the solemn note of the early centuries to one also of rejoicing. The greater number of Advent hymns today speak of joyous anticipation, like: "On Jordan's banks the Baptist's cry, announces that the Lord is nigh: Awake and hearken, for He brings Glad tidings of the King of kings." Or "Hark, the glad sound! the Savior comes."

Elements of both earnest repentance and exceeding joy are thus found in Advent.

At the close of the sixth century, Rome, under Gregory the Great, established four Sundays before Christmas as Advent.

In England forty days of fasting before the celebration of the birth of the Lord were observed in the seventh and eighth centuries.

In the Greek Church the general observance of forty days of penitential preparation for Christmas does not appear to have been established before the thirteenth century.

There are some colorful traditions. In Normandy farmers still employ children to run with lighted torches through the fields and orchards, setting fire to bundles of straw to drive out vermin, so the Christ child might have a clean bed. In Italy the last days of Advent are marked by the entry into Rome of Calabrian pifferari" (itinerant musicians) who play bagpipes as shepherds were imagined to have done before the infant Savior. Each Christian nation has its own special customs.

But of singular importance is the opportunity to celebrate the approach of Christ who became man to be our Savior.

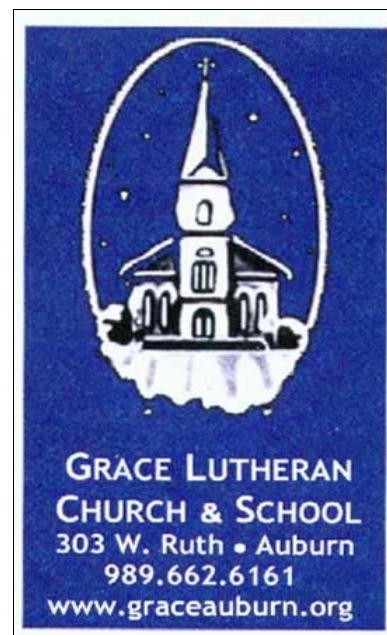
Advent gives us all the spiritual opportunity to think clearly and soberly about the mystery of the Incarnation. As the hymn exclaims, "Life has come, with life for all."

The word Advent means "coming," and has reference to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ: His coming in the flesh and in weakness; His coming in spirit and in power; and His coming in glory and in majesty.

One symbol of Advent is the Advent rose which is often seen in literature of the season. Each pedal represents one of Christ's wounds on the cross which is the foremost symbol of Christ's revelation.

Christ has come to save!

It has been said that while here on earth we Christians always live during Advent. That's a revealing statement. While our hearts fill with joy, there will always be the eager anticipation and the note of seriousness associated with Christ's final coming, His final Advent. Therefore the church goes on celebrating Advent in all its varied meanings, praying, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus, come. Amen"



As a simple greeting and worship invitation, small cards have been prepared this year which everyone is welcome to use, along with our local mission intention, to encourage anyone to join us in worship during December. The cards may be given to a friend, a neighbor, a new-comer, or colleague who may not have a church family.

Please consider taking a card or two in your pocket or purse, being conscious of expressing a Christ-centered greeting to someone who could, through you, be encouraged to meet Christ here at Grace with you.

Cards are available now here at church. Dates and

Hanging of the Greens

As part of the Advent observance, Grace will conduct three evening services the Wednesdays of December 5th, 12th, and 19th, (7:00 pm) The services will be light-hearted as we share the sounds of Advent's song and the glad message of Christ and His peace within our church family. Highlighting the mid-week services will be a celebration of "The Hanging of the Greens," December 12th. The practice of adorning God's house for Christmas this Advent will be woven into a special worship time. Explaining the imagery of Advent symbols from garlands and poinsettia to Chrismons and crèche, the service will include lessons and carols linked to those symbols of Christ's coming so familiar to this season. The congregation may share, as a response of worship, the preparation of God's house for Christmas.



Let's Go to Bethlehem

Travis McNally and Laura Clare are among the Grace children preparing for the annual Children's Christmas Program, Sunday, Dec. 16, 7:00.

Other youngsters including Cameron Murray and Alexis Vance (*right*) are learning the songs of Jesus' birth. Please join us for the special evening



24th Annual Auburn Community Christmas Sing-A-Long

The Auburn community Christmas Sing-a-Long will be Sunday, December 2, at St. Joseph Church. The Concert begins at 5:30, with special numbers from participants during the program. Following the Sing-A-Long will be a time of refreshments in the social hall. Anyone is invited to provide "finger foods" (cookies, bars, cheese, crackers, etc.) that can be brought just prior to the program. Coffee and punch will be provided. How enjoyable that our community continues to join together to celebrate this festive time in such a

December Adult Sunday Bible Study

During the education hour on the Sundays of December, adults are invited to join in a Bible study of Jonah. Jonah was the prophet of Israel whose personal history is gathered from a book bearing his name, telling one of the most intriguing and memorable Old Testament stories. Jonah was a reluctant missionary whom God used as a type of the "Son of man." Disobedient, yet delivered through repentance and God's mercy, Jonah has much to teach us. Join us for a direct Bible study of Jonah during Advent.



Honored WWII Veterans of Grace Lutheran Church

Left to right: first row, **Earl Schmidt, Elmer Reiss, Ben VanTol, Roland Reiss, Bill Friebe, John Dominoski, Harlan Taglauer.** (standing) **Roland Taglauer, Elmer Taglauer, Bob Schmidt, Don Wackerly, Bill Reiss, Martin Eichinger, and Walt Barber.** Not pictured: **Jack Greenleaf.**

Special Worship Notes

Advent Matins and Vespers

Even though the early or late hour may not accommodate most Grace members, it is yet good for you to know once again, during this potential season, that morning Matins and evening Vespers services will be conducted daily during Advent.

The pattern echoes what was done this past Lent. Each morning and evening, beginning with the first week of Advent, until Christmas, there will be services twice a day in the Grace sanctuary.

At 6 a.m. each day, a service of Morning Prayer or Matins will be sung. Lessons and a brief devotion are also part of the worship time. The service is not meant to draw great numbers of people but to serve as a sacred time in which prayers for the congregation, the church at large, and world may be pray shared.

Similarly, an evening Vespers service will close the day at 9 p.m. each evening (except on those evenings of a Congregational Advent service or the children's Christmas service. Check the calendar online.

An easy signal to indicate a service in progress will be the illumination of the porch light at the church entrance. If the light is on, please feel free to come to the front of the sanctuary.

For those unable to attend, we hope you will exercise your own daily devotional life in a renewal of daily time in the Word and prayer. Even if you cannot be in the sanctuary, you can parallel the worship with your own prayers and devotion.

Elders Asked to Consider Worship Times

This past fall, the Grace Board of Elders was requested at a Voter's assembly meeting to review Sunday worship hours to see whether a single united Sunday worship service or some other composition of worship opportunities might better serve the needs of our congregation.

Please be assured that no change—*none*—is anticipated any time soon. The Elders respect the sincere interest by those who have asked or encouraged such a review. Because worship is the center of our Christian family life, the elders are prompted to a very careful inquiry.

Consolidation of Sunday services or an expansion of worship opportunities to alternate times can only best occur by thorough-

going conversation and patience
among our whole
church family.
The Board of



Elders has begun this conversation by seeking first to detail the core Christian and Lutheran worship values which should guide our thinking. The men have only begun this effort.

Such a process will take time, and your elders will appreciate your interest, insights, and participation in due time. They are committed not only to transparency but also sensitivity over something of such worth.

It is conceivable that eventually there will be no change in the general pattern of worship opportunities. Such was a previous conclusion. We resist all speculation. But we realize there are some persuasive reasons which might lead otherwise which deserve attention..

The elders do ask, please, that no one “jump to any conclusions” or suppose any decision will be made without allowing all thoughtful input from you. This matter entails far more than just favorite worship times or personal preference. It touches upon our priorities of life, our confession of Christ, our love for each other, and our willingness to mature with our eyes ever on the cross.

New Pew Bibles

Recently, companion Bibles have been placed into the pews to complement our new Lutheran Service Book. The Bibles were provided through Memorial funds and contain the text of the ESV (English Standard Version) of Scripture read at our worship services.

The reason for having Bibles to match the readings is to foster greater use of the Bible in the sanctuary. The Elders will review the practice of printing texts after a time of evaluation. Page numbers for the readings will be printed in this service folder.

The English Standard Bible (ESV)

The English Standard Version (ESV) was chosen as the primary Bible translation for the new LCMS hymnal (LSB). The recommendation was adopted by Synod in convention. The selection of a Bible translation for primary use within the worship settings of our congregations required careful deliberation. In 2002, a Synod Translations Committee issued a comparative study of modern Bible translations. All 35 districts and circuit pastoral conferences were encouraged to study the issue. Then in 2003, an opinion from the Commission on Theology and Church Relations noted: “On theological and linguistic grounds ... and on text-critical grounds, the English Standard Version (is preferred).”

The interest is always to have a Bible most consistent faithfully in translating the original languages of the Bible into the language of today. The primary criterion for the choice of the ESV is the accuracy of translation. The ESV is a highly reliable translation, the choice of which offers our Synod the opportunity to delve ever deeper into God's holy Word.

Expectant Christians

Peter Fredrich, Principal

Ten bridesmaids are waiting for a wedding reception to begin. Can you imagine a more carefree, excited group of people? The heavy responsibilities of preparing for the wedding went to someone else. All they had to do was stand there and look pretty. Now the serious part of the ceremony is over and the fun part is about to begin: to laugh and play and eat and drink, perhaps until the wee hours of the morning. These bridesmaids have everything to look forward to, whether the wedding takes place at the time of Christ, or in the twenty-first century.

Jesus compares these excited bridesmaids to his disciples, and to us, the members of the holy Christian church on earth. We are looking forward to something far better than a wedding reception. We are looking forward to the glories of heaven.

Jesus has promised that He will return. "I am going to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am." The Revelation of St. John describes heaven as a beautiful city with streets of gold so pure that it shines like glass, filled with light that proceeds from God himself, where saints and angels sing joyful praises to the Lamb who poured out his blood for their salvation.

That's what Christians are looking forward to. That's what you and I are looking forward to. That's what our students are looking forward to. And when we think about it like that, the prospect of our Lord's return is far more exciting than a wedding re-

ception. For this is one celebration that is going to last forever.

The Children's Bazaar, Hollyland Mall, will be on December 11th 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, have been invited to Grace to shop as well.

Our second mid-quarter ends Friday, December 7. All students will receive their progress reports with the memo on December 11. They should be signed and returned to school.

The Children's Christmas Program will be held in the church on December 16th beginning at 7:00. The program will begin with an optional student recital. The presentation is titled "Let's Go to Bethlehem."

Classes will end at the completion of the regular school day on Friday, December 21 for the beginning of our Christmas Break. Classes resume on Wednesday, January 2, 2008. Bay City Public will not be in session that day, so alternative transportation will need



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 of the equal sign. 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 have been studying them one at a time in separate units. We have already covered sentence structure and nouns and will now begin a study of verbs.

Our geography journey has brought us to Latin America. Common threads of language and religion unite this region. Once claimed as European colonies, most Latin American countries still use either Spanish or Portuguese as the official language. These two languages are based on Latin, which is how the regions get their name. Scientists group plants as either vascular – those with water and food-conducting cells in their stems or nonvascular – those without the transportation cells. Vascular plants are further divided into those that produce spores or those that make seeds. The world of plants is the current focus of our life science studies. Religion for the month of December will focus on all the preparations needed for our annual Christmas program presented December 16th titled "Let's Go to Bethlehem."

Jesse and Emily checking out some of the great books

5 & 6 Grade Happenings

November found grades 5 and 6 busy serving others and learning about the world around them. We were fortunate enough to have a special speaker, Sarah VanTol, to share with us her expertise on



weather. She presented information on severe weather to supplement our science unit on atmosphere and weather.

The students heard about how clouds form, different types of clouds, thunder storms, lightning, and tornados.

Our class sponsored a food drive for needy Auburn-area families. With the assistance of the whole school, we were able to collect 4 large boxes! We hope this was a blessing to those less fortunate. God has given us so much to be thankful for. We took time to pause and give thanks with our families as we celebrated Thanksgiving with a short break from school.



We traveled to the Chippewa Na-



ture Center to learn more about the Woodland Indians from our area. The children were able to sew moccasins, feel arrowhead, use hide scrapers on a deer pelt, and actually try to make fire from primitive tools. The fieldtrip complemented our study of native peoples of North America.

We are preparing for our Christmas program by learning new songs and speaking parts to bring the true message of Christmas to all of you. We would love for you to come and see our performance on Sunday, December 16th at 7 p.m. Enjoy your Christmas celebration with your families!

Merry Christmas
~LuAnn VanSickle
5th & 6th Grade Teacher

**Travis McNally
and
Matt Feinauer
sew moccasins.**



Melissa Vennix and Abbie Hockemeyer try to make fire at the Chippewa Nature Center

December's Update For Room 4

I'd like to start by telling 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. The students liked going through the mud the most. Afterward, our guide led us by foot through the orchard teaching us about the animals that live in the orchard, both the good and the bad. She talked to us about the insects that are in the orchard and alternatives to spraying the trees with pesticides. She also taught us several reasons why apples are so good for us. 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 made their way over to the corn maze. The maze was confusing and exhilarating. Once they 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, slid 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 bird feeder, received a coloring book, and said our goodbyes. We piled back into our cars and rode back to school. What a fun, educational, and satisfying day!

In arithmetic, students continue to practice their addition and subtraction facts in second grade, adding with carrying, and adding money combinations. Third graders are



dividing with larger and larger dividends, and fourth grade is finding common factors and making equivalent fractions to add and subtract fractions with unlike denominators. We finished our unit on The Changing Earth in science. Students really enjoyed the "river" and making volcanoes "erupt."

In addition to all our academics, we are busy memorizing recitations and songs for our Christmas program on Sunday, December 16, 2007. This year the shepherds will be played by Casey, Colton, Evan, and Spencer. Our class would like to extend an invitation to all of you. We hope to see you there and share the message of the Savior with each of you.

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!

**Science buddies
Hunter and Kaylee work-**

Grades K, 1 & 2

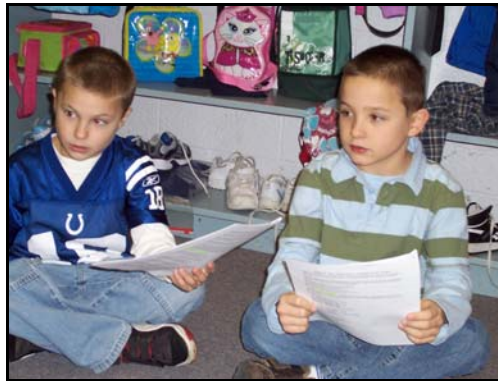
Did you see the snow flying at the end of November? We were very excited to see the first snowflakes, even if they didn't stay for long!!!

In Kindergarten, we continue learning! We can hardly believe how much we have learned so far. Did you know that we have been in school for more than 60 days now! Wendel the Worm moves to a new number every school day to help us count and keep track of how many days we have been in school. In Kindergarten we are also beginning to read our own books. It is very exciting!

In 1st grade the work is becoming more challenging. We are reading more by ourselves and our math is getting harder. We count all types of coins and we are even beginning to work on fractions! We also have to answer questions about stories

we have read. Our spelling words are becoming very helpful when writing our sentences. Now more people are able to read our sentences because we are able to spell the words correctly. That is very exciting!

2nd grade continues to work more independently. However, there are many new things to learn in 2nd grade. We've been learning about subjects and predicates. We've been learning the correct placement of commas in sentences. We've also been learning



Rayferd and Cameron studying for the Christmas Program

to write our answers using complete sentences. Yes, there is a lot of challenging work in 2nd grade!

Of course, the big event of December is our school Christmas Program. We began working on our songs and parts for the program before Thanksgiving break! We hope you will be able to join us for our school Christmas Program on Sunday, December 16th at 7:00 p.m.

As you can tell, our class has been very busy and full of energy! We are all very excited about learning. We pray that you are also excited about learning new things. We pray as you enter into the holiday season, that you take the time to worship our Lord and Savior.

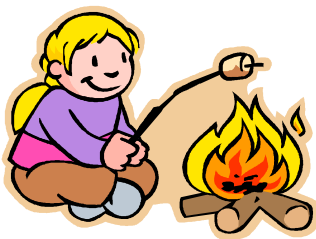


Grace Lutheran Camping Weekend

Mark your calendars and join us **August 1 – 3** for a weekend of fun and fellowship at Isabella County Park on Coldwater Lake. We will be sending our representatives to the County building to make our reservations on January 2, 2008, so we need to have your site preference and money

before this date. For those of you who do not have a camper or a tent, the campground does have five cabins for rent. These cabins do fill quickly, but we would be happy to check availability if someone is interested. We

will attempt to reserve sites in the same area as last year, which were sites 6 through 40. Many of the campers go up a day early and/or stay a day late so let us know if you would like to reserve for more than the two nights. Contact Diane McNally at 496-3123 (email dandtmcnally@yahoo.com) or Karla Weiss at 671-1711 (email ekweiss@prodigy.net) by Jan. 1 to reserve your campsite. The cost of a camp site is \$20/night; the cabin rental is \$40/night.



Karla Weiss roasting her marshmallows

Jeff Sugden forgot to put gas in his engine.

Altar Guild

The altar guild has been around, in a manner of speaking, since the early days of the church when the Levites were chosen by God to serve him and his people. The main purpose of the altar guild is to serve. We serve God, we serve the pastor and we serve the congregation.

The altar guild requires a spiritual commitment since it is, first serving God, and then His people. The members of the altar guild should be devoted, reliable, humble, and reverent to their tasks.

The altar guild has a spiritual goal. It is for the glory of God's name and the caring of his people. Everything that is done in the church service is to help in the communication of the gospel. Nothing is to detract from God's word or Sacraments.

Altar guild members first of all are serving God and then are also serving God's people. We serve by making sure that the church is set up for the different seasons of the church year. We do this by seeing that the paraments, linens and vessels are cleaned and stored properly. We make sure that all the proper preparations are made for each church service and that everything is cleaned and put away after the service. Other responsibilities include ordering the appropriate supplies needed, sewing necessary linens, caring for the flowers on the altar, maintaining acolyte robes, seeing the sanctuary is properly cleaned for each church service, and any other things that would enhance the worship service.



Decorating of the church for the Christmas season is scheduled for Saturday, December 15th at 9:00 am. There will be coffee, donuts, and lots of fellowship offered. Please come and help us decorate for the season.

The 24th Annual Auburn Community Christmas Sing-A-Long

The Auburn community Christmas Sing-A-Long will be Sunday, December 2, 2007, at St. Joseph Church. The Concert begins at 5:30, with special numbers from the participating churches taking place during the program. Following the Sing-A-Long will be a fellowship time with refreshments in the social hall. All participating churches are asked to provide "finger foods" (cookies, bars, cheese, crackers, etc.) They can be brought just prior to the program. Coffee & punch will be provided. How exciting that our community continues to join together to celebrate the holidays in such a special way.



Poinsettias for the Altar



We are taking orders for anyone that would like to purchase a poinsettia plant for the beautification of our Altar area for this holiday season. There are envelopes and a box to place your order on the Usher's desk. You may take your plant home after the holidays.

Christmas Potluck

The CPTL is holding the annual potluck on December 2 beginning after the late service. We will be providing Roast porkloin, bread & beverages. Families are asked to bring one dish to pass (enough to feed 15). If your last name begins with A-D bring a main dish. E-K bring a dessert, L-R bring a cold salad or fruit or veggie tray, S-Z bring a hot vegetable or hot potato dish.

The Giving Tree



For many years, Grace has had the tradition of giving to those in our community who need extra help this time of the year through our Giving Tree. The names have been provided by Lutheran Child & Family Services. LCFS is suggesting a gift value of \$25.00 per person and they will be delivering the gifts through their caseworkers. They are asking that items be placed in gift bags and clearly marked with the name/code tags that are on the tree. Please return all gifts, with tags, no later than December 9.

Youth December Activities

Wow, how the year has already flown by....

Recently, at our regular monthly meeting, the last Sunday of the month, a forum of a few Youth members decided on plans for our annual Christmas party. A progressive dinner is planned for Sunday, December 16th. If you are uncertain of what a progressive dinner is, we hope that you join us to find out. We'll give you a hint... We start with appetizers at the Whalen house, continue to the Sugden's for our main course, and end our evening at the Roth's with dessert, gift giving, and games. (Okay, so you probably have it figured out already.) We hope to see all Youth there for this afternoon of fun. We'll start by meeting at church at 1 pm and carpooling to each destination. Please bring a gift (funny gifts from the dollar stores are the best) to give.

The advent season has also brought a winter appetite for some soup, so the Youth are sponsoring a "free-will" offering Soup Supper before church on Wednesday, December 12th. Each of the Youth are asked to bring one dessert and Lynn Schmidt will make some yummy soups for everyone to warm themselves on before church. Please arrive at 5 pm to set up for the dinner to begin at 5:30 pm. Any additional details will be given via phone call.

The wreath sale went very well for our first year. These will be ready for pick-up after services on December 2nd in the school gym. Please be available after the service which you attend for help with carry outs and organization.

In addition to the wreath sale for a fundraiser, we have planned to do a pop can drive on Sunday, January 6th. This entails going from house to house asking to take care of their empty pop cans for returns. In the past, this has been a very good fundraiser, but only if we have a great deal of participation. We need all to participate, and we are also asking for adults to help with driving Youth around for pickups. Please meet on Sunday at church at noon or after late service.

Every year, the three Youth board members are excited to see new young faces in Grace's Youth group. We love to see these interaction and friendships that grow when the group changes each year. It is a joy to serve our Savior by working with the Youth as they are just great kids that are growing in Christ.

The Youth Board strives to create a Christian environment that your children may grow in Christ. This is done in several different ways. This year, the Youth board has taken it upon themselves to create weekly Bible studies for the Youth on current subjects in their lives. Even though there is a lack of Sunday school for other ages, we believe that this is a terribly important time for the kids to join together in worship and study of Christ. We do realize that the Youth have several different obligations in their busy lives, but the Youth board wants to make an effort in every way to maintain the Christian well being that they receive at home and help them to grow in their faith. If at any time, we can help them to attend worship and Sunday school, please give any advisor a call.

We are also working on making the Mackinac Michigan District Youth Gathering happen. At this point, the Youth who turned in forms will be registered for the gathering. This is a significant financial expense for the group and possibly parents. To keep this from being a financial burden on the parents we need your Youth to participate and cooperate fully in Youth fundraisers and attend monthly meetings.

The Youth advisors periodically ask for parental help with chaperoning, driving, or planning certain activities. We just can't run and maintain an excellent Youth group on our own. Your special skills and time are needed to make this a great growing experience for your children. Trust us. You'll enjoy your time with this group. Please volunteer and feel free to ask any questions. Just pop your head in the Youth room one Sunday, and one of us will be available to answer them.

Thank you. *Angie Meyer, Sarah VanTol, and Pam Whalen*

Let's Celebrate!

The women of Grace congregation are invited to attend our annual Christmas dinner on Tuesday, December 11, at 6:00 p.m. in the school library.

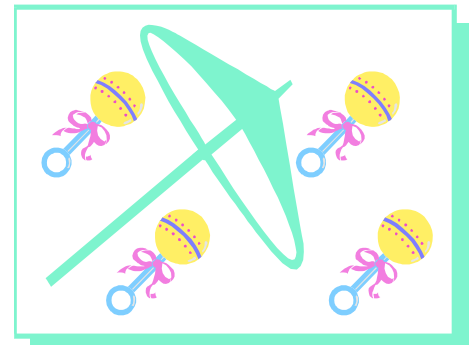


This year some changes have been made. Because of the rising costs for catering or going out to eat, our dinner will be served in potluck style. The committee will provide the meat, rolls and tableware, and attendees, the salads, vegetables, potatoes and desserts. Some have already signed up for bringing dishes and attending, so if you would like to join us, give Sue Reed a call at 662-7900.

Also, in lieu of a Christmas gift exchange, we will be remembering a young couple with a 6 1/2 month old baby boy from the Auburn area who are struggling financially and are in need of help. How appropriate at this time of year as we think back to that couple in Bethlehem with their newborn son, to be able to reach out and minister to another. The baby now weighs 19-20 pounds. Some of the items needed are:

- Diapers - stage 4
- Clothing - 12-24 mo. (one piece outfits)
- Formula - Concentrated - Enfamil Lipil w/ Iron
- Baby food - Stage 2
- Baby Wipes
- Onesies - 12-24 mo.
- Socks - 6 1/2 mo.
- Bathing supplies
- Washcloths
- Portable Humidifier
- Car Seat (for his weight size)
- Snowsuit
- Crib mattress

We hope all of you can join us. Please bring a friend to share in the fellowship at this most joyous season.





Given in Memory

Donald Muentener
By
John & Iris Dominowski

Edna Mesh
By
Elmer & Irene Taglauer
Bob & Olive Schmidt

Gertrude Dasky
By
Roland & Ellen Reiss
Bob & Olive Schmidt

Ester Weiland
By
Bob & Olive Schmidt

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF for 2007

Grace Lutheran congregation is actively involved in Lutheran World Relief through monetary donations which go through our Special Accounts. However, as you have probably seen or heard throughout the years, we also participate in this organization in other ways.

This past year we have sent 68 quilts, 180 bars of soap, 28 health kits, and 39 school kits to the organization which then repackages them and sends them to areas in need of these items. Our representatives took them to Grace Lutheran Church in Saginaw on October 15. They were then loaded into a boxcar in Detroit on October 17.

Many of you are also probably aware that LWR can no longer accept used clothing from our drives for the foreign fields. In recent years many countries have altered their policies regarding used clothing imports. Some are even prohibiting such imports due to the reasoning that they disrupt local economies, and in some instances, threaten local textile and manufacturing jobs. Other countries are charging increasingly high customs duty and taxes, making shipping costs prohibitively expensive. In many cases it is better to purchase clothing locally. LWR will continue to ship any previously collected clothing that remains in their warehouse until those supplies are exhausted.

We thank the congregation members for their continued support of this program, and we intend to keep up the support in the ways available to us. This organization is one of the best charities in the world for getting the highest possible percentage of funds and materials to the people for whom it is intended. God has blessed these efforts, and will continue to do so through your efforts and generosity.

Our 2007 contributions through October are \$326,233 verses \$351,564 for 2006. This is a reduction of \$25,331.

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

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

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December

December Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

3 Thomas Prah, 4 Kathryn Battle, 4 Robert Krystosek, 4 Drew Schmidt, 4 Kerry Storey, 5 Margaret Barber, 6 James Feinauer, 6 Bernard VanTol, 6 James Webb, 8 Roy Hayward Jr, 8 Russell Pickelman, 8 Jacob Schmidt, 8 Barbara Vennix, 11 Laurretta Friebe, 11 Emily Gray, 11 Christopher Lewicki, 12 Aaron Bauer, 12 Bethany Weiss, 13 Jordan Hakes, 14 Taylor Bickham, 16 Carol Bickham, 17 Michael Lance, 18 Zachary Horneber, 20 Benjamin Jankens, 20 Jessica Pyle, 21 Amy Bickham, 21 Brian Keidel, 21 Steven VanTol, 22 Ashly Kraatz, 22 Emily Kraatz, 22 Cindy Walter, 23 Kyle Rauschenberger, 24 Rita Reiss, 24 Justin Varner, 24 Ruth Anna Wegener, 26 Barbara Gonyea, 26 Brian Keidel, 26 Irene Taglauer, 27 Mary Korman, 27 Tracy Storey, 28 Dallas Eichman, 28 Cameron Morford, 30 Allyse Fiebke

Anniversaries

5 Jeffrey & Barbara Vennix, 10 Mark & Pamela Horneber, 10 Ronald & Carol Mularz, 22 Mark & Doreen Hetzner, 28 Allen & Edyth Ousterhout, 31 Elmer & Irene Taglauer