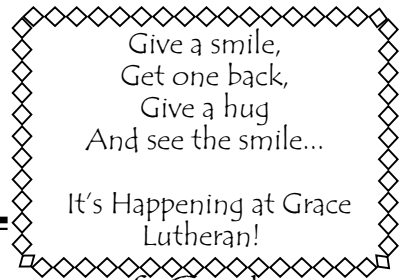


The BEACON

Shines with Grace Lutheran Church News

December, 2022



From the Pastor's Desk: The Ubiquity of God

I don't know about you, but I love snow (when I don't have to drive in it). I love to watch snowflakes fall gracefully to the ground or bluster about in the wind. I love to feel them land on my outstretched tongue. I love to see them pile up high and glisten in the sunshine. I love to make snow balls for throwing and snow blocks for building igloos. Snowflakes are beautiful.



be that way too especially when we resist heeding his Work and Word.

Snow comes in many forms – snow, ice, water, dew. God also comes in several forms – God the Creator, Jesus the Redeemer, the Holy Spirit the Sustainer. God appears in people or animals who provide us with comfort. Snow, in all its forms, can be found everywhere. Our Lord God

A wise person once told me that snow reminded him of the ubiquity of God. It's beautiful when it comes down and blankets the earth. Snowflakes eventually melt turning into water which feeds the plants and trees. Then that snow, which turned to water, evaporates into the air which is carried in the clouds all over the world. After a while, it comes back down again to the ground in some form – snow, rain, dew, or ice. He thought that snow was like God because it could be found everywhere and at all times. This wise person was my son, Brandon, at five years of age. What a wise perspective he had at such a young age.

is omnipresent – his presence is spread throughout the whole world. And His Spirit is like the moisture in the air – we breathe it in, and it gives us life.

I have never forgotten his comments, and I find it more meaningful the longer I ponder it. I'm not saying God is snow, but the fact is that God is like snow (and its other forms). Just as snow falls quietly to earth, so did God come down as a little baby born in a manger, quietly and quite unexpectedly. Scripture tells us to listen for God's still small voice.

Just as surely as the snow falls upon us, so did, does and will God come to be among us! Let it snow! Let God come to us as a tiny baby. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. God's kingdom will have no end. His reign is boundless.

A snowflake is relatively small and sometimes unnoticeable. God's handiwork is sometimes small and sometimes goes unnoticed. But if you've ever taken the time to study snowflakes up close, they are magnificently beautiful. God's work may be small and unrecognizable by many, but if you catch a glimpse of Him in our world, you'll see the full beauty that He possesses.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of you!

Your Sister in Christ,
Pastor Debbie

Snow provides the nutrients of the ground, waters the fields, refreshes the grass, trees, and flowers. God too is always providing the nurture, nutrients, and salvation for all living creatures.

Then there are other times when snow is annoying and comes at inopportune times. For some, God can

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CONGREGATIONAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS



Our Congregational Meeting was held on November 13 between services. *The Beacon's* roving reporter captured the highlights:

President Scott Hildebrand let us know that we are operating in a more significant deficit since COVID-19. The budget was reviewed and there were no questions or comments and was passed.

The next order of business was to elect the 2023 Church Council. Three current members have agreed to serve another term: Mark, Ronnie and Amy. We thank Riley for her service.

Suzanne raised concerns about the constitution amendments on the agenda. She drew our attention to three sections in which the word 'equity' has been used. She feels it creates politically correct language that is limiting, and feels 'equality' would be a more appropriate word, since the word that is being expressed should be about fairness and not treating everyone the same. Pr. Jorgensen, who is from the Synod and happened to be our supply pastor due to Pr. Debbie needing some time to recuperate. He was able to clarify how the document was created (the constitution is a document recommended by Synod). Pr. Jorgensen said the Synod created the document to ensure all pastors and their congregations lead without prejudice and welcome all. He was quick to say that our congregation is leading well in this area. The vote for the constitution was an up or down vote and was done by secret ballot and passed 32 to 19.

This year, there was a wonderful handout summarizing the committees' achievements. This document will be published in the January issue of *The Beacon*.

HOLIDAY SERVICES

Here is our schedule for the holiday season. Please note that since Christmas and New Year's Day fall on Sunday, we will be having combined services on those days.

December 24
5:00 p.m. Contemporary Christmas Eve Service
10:45 p.m. Traditional Christmas Eve Service

December 25
10:00 a.m. Combined Worship Service

December 31
5:00 p.m. New Year's Eve Celebration

January 1
10:00 a.m. Combined Worship Service



The council meeting was held on 11/10 at 6:30 p.m. at Grace Lutheran Church. Pastor Debbie opened with a prayer.

The Oktoberfest was an overwhelming success with over 70 people in attendance, good food and great entertainment. All agreed, we need to plan more events such as that.

The Pastor reported on visitations and a funeral.

The Treasurer's report included nothing unusual for October income/expenses.

A member of the finance committee presented some thoughts on the committee and the church's finances.

Our large piano (Steinway) is in need of extensive repairs. One estimate is in-hand, a second estimate was recently requested by Mary.

The committee reports included Mission and Discipleship, Worship and Music. They covered muffins / soup for shut-ins and the timing to display the nativity scene in the front yard.

Building use and the 125th anniversary party were also quickly covered.

Halloween on the Street was a large community outreach success, including giving away 300+ hot dogs, 400+ bags of candy, 400+ glow sticks, 144 coats/boots and 3 bushels of apples.

The annual congregation meeting occurred on 11/13/2022. It was well attended by Grace Lutheran church members and guests including Pastor Richard Jorgenson. Pastor Debbie opened with a prayer.

Approved during this meeting was:

1. The 2023 Grace Lutheran Church budget
2. Re-election of council members Mark, Ronnie and Amy for 3 year terms.
3. Approval of the GLC constitutional changes, based on updates from the ELCA's new model constitution coming from a church wide tri-annual meeting.

Midweek services are offered December 7, 14, 21

Come celebrate Advent during the week! This relaxed 7:00 p.m. service is for all ages. Invite your friends and join us! We will be worshipping in the Welcome Center, and experiencing scenes from the play, *The Year I Glued My Stockings to the Wall (and Other Advent Stories)* by Sheree Mann.

NATIVITY

Our lovely new Nativity Scene is festively spreading the joy of the season in the church garden. We are so grateful for this new addition to our Christmas tradition. Thank you so much to everyone who helped make this happen, and participated in the set up!



ERMA'S INSPIRATIONS Silent Sermon

A member of a certain church, who previously had been attending services regularly, stopped going. After a few weeks, the pastor decided to visit him.

It was a chilly evening. The pastor found the man at home alone, sitting before a blazing fire. Guessing the reason for his pastor's visit, the man welcomed him, led him to a comfortable chair near the fireplace and waited.

The pastor made himself at home but said nothing. In the grave silence, he contemplated the dance of the flames around the burning logs. After some minutes, the pastor took the fire tongs, carefully picked up a brightly burning ember and placed it to one side of the hearth all alone. Then he sat back in his chair, still silent.

The host watched all this in quiet contemplation. As the one lone ember's flame flickered and diminished, there was a momentary glow and then its fire was no more. Soon it was cooled and dead.

Not a word had been spoken since the initial greeting. The pastor glanced at his watch and realized it was time to leave. He slowly stood up, picked up the cold, dead ember and placed it back in the middle of the fire. Immediately it began to glow, once more with the light and warmth of the burning coals around it.

As the pastor reached the door to leave, his host said with a tear running down his cheek, "thank you so much for your visit and especially for the fiery sermon. I shall be back in church next Sunday."



RECIPE CORNER

Joyce Arnold shared with us a quick and easy dessert recipe. Thank you Joyce!

Raspberry Cream Pie
12 oz Philadelphia Cream Cheese
3/8 c. sugar
3/4 teaspoons vanilla
3/8 c. 10x sugar
1 1/2 c. black raspberries
1 1/2 c. Cool Whip
1 (9 inch) ready made graham cracker pie crust

Soften cream cheese in mixer. Add sugar, vanilla, and 10x sugar and mix well. Fold in Cool Whip. Add in black raspberries to a fold. Spoon into pie crust. Store in the refrigerator and top with black raspberries to your desire.

P.S. I love this recipe. Being in the Masonic Village, my cooking is limited. This is a quick recipe and you may substitute other fresh fruit.

If you have a recipe to share, we accept them on paper in the newsletter mailbox outside the church office, via email through the submission guidelines below, or even take a photo of your recipe and text it to 717-373-3012.



PARISH EDUCATION SETS CLASSES FOR ADVENT

Our Parish Education Committee has been busy planning learning opportunities for us in the Advent season. Our Advent plan for Christian education is learning the Bible connection and background of some Christmas song favorites. This study is during the Sunday School hour between services every week during Advent. This is the schedule for the Advent study:

12/4 "First Noel" -Sharon Hont
12/11 "Silent Night" -Pastor Debbie
12/18 " What Child is This?" -Barb Taute



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THE STEWARDSHIP GUY A Budget is a Statement of Faith

What does your church's annual budget represent? Is it a proud menu of the hopes, dreams and missionary ministries your congregation wants to accomplish in the year to come?

Or is it a life-support prescription for how the congregation expects to pay the staff, keep the lights burning, the staff paid and property maintained?

In a workshop when she was stewardship officer for the Episcopal Church, the late Terry Parsons gave this "Devil's Dictionary" definition of a church budget: "It is the means by which we notify the Lord of the limitations we intend to impose on his gifts for the coming year."

If we view the budget — and present it to our congregations — as an administrative necessity to ensure proper financial management, then we shouldn't be surprised to wind up with bare-bones measures that are grudgingly funded. If funded at all.

But if we present the budget to our congregations as opportunities to invest in the Reign of God and stretch ourselves to see how much we can do with even the nickels and dimes God has given us, then the possibilities increase.

In the end, a budget is a statement about how a congregation views the future. Do your people trust that ours is the God of abundance who rewards faithful stewards and will stand behind servants who proclaim the Reign of God? If an outsider looked at your budget, what would he or she conclude about your congregation's faith?

And what would be a "God's Dictionary" definition of a church budget? How about, "It is the means by which we make the most of the abundance the Lord is giving us." Hmmm. That will look nice on the cover of the annual report.

--Rob Blezard

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WHAT'S IN THE DISPLAY CASE?

*"Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift."
-2 Corinthians 9-15*

God's gift to us came in the most fragile package. Why did God choose such a way to send His Son to earth? His greatest gift came in the most fragile way, a baby to watch over us because he loves us. Let us be thankful today for such a gift.

Our Christmas cabinet will show many signs of God's presence over the holiday season. May you know the peace of Christmas every day of the year!

Pat, Janet, Keith & Peggy



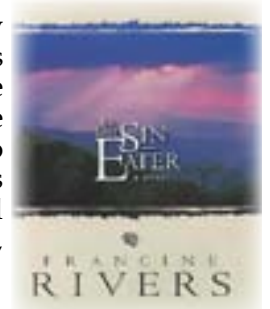
BOOK CLUB



Our December book is *The Last Sin Eater* by Francine Rivers. Goodreads.com has this to say about the book:

1999 Gold Medallion Award winner! A repackaged of Francine Rivers's beloved novel, now with stunning movie stills from the motion picture releasing in January 2007 and bonus discussion questions. All that matters for Cadi Forbes is finding the one man who can set her free from the sin that plagues her, the sin that has stolen her mother's love from her and made her wish she could flee life and its terrible injustice. But Cadi doesn't know that the "sin eater" is seeking as well. Before their journeys are over, Cadi and the sin eater must face themselves, each other, and the One who will demand everything from them in exchange for the answers they seek. A captivating tale of suffering, seeking, and redemption.

We meet on the third Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m. to discuss the book (December 15). We have a wonderful relationship with the York County Library System, so we are able to borrow the books we read without cost. If you would like a copy of the book to borrow, see Geri Jacobs or Jennifer Rudolf.



HOW TO SUBMIT TO THE NEWSLETTER

We welcome all submissions to the newsletter. The newsletter is a great place to ask for help, publicize an event you are planning in the church, tell people about something you or your family are doing, thank members, celebrate a victory. The possibilities are endless! The vision for the newsletter is to communicate between members in a clear and interesting format. If you would like to submit to the newsletter or help in any way, here is what you can do:

*If you are comfortable with computers, you may email Chris Jacobs at: knndsi1@yahoo.com. Please make sure your document is either a .doc or .pdf file. If you are including digital artwork, make sure it is at least 300KB in size.

*If you prefer paper, just drop off your submission in the mailbox marked 'newsletter' outside the office door. The mailboxes are located on a table across the hall.

Please keep in mind that the deadline for submission is the 20th of each month for the following month's newsletter. If you have pictures or graphics that complement your submission, include them along with directions or suggestions on their use. Please include your contact information in every submission so the editor can get in touch to clarify or fact-check. If you are interested in a monthly submission or article, we welcome that as well.

LUTHERAN CAMPING



Advent Day Apart:
December 3 from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the Wittel Farm. Join us for an Advent Day Apart at The Wittel Farm, a day of Bible study, worship, and prayerful reflection as we seek to prepare for the coming

of the Christ. Registration fee includes lunch.

Advent/Christmas in the Barn: December 18 from 7-8:30 p.m. at the Wittel Farm. Join us at the farm for our annual Advent/Christmas night. This year, we'll gather around the outdoor fire and have cookies and cocoa in the barn. Lights and decorations!

NEW YEARS EVE



If you are not aware, the Red Lion Borough is not hosting First Night for New Year's Eve this year due to insufficient funds and volunteers. Grace

Lutheran, however, will continue with our

usual festivities beginning at 5:00 p.m. and ending at 8:00 p.m. on the 31st of December. We will still have hat decorating and crafts, we will still have food, we will still have fellowship. In addition, we will be adding face painting from 6-7:00 p.m. Since the borough is not underwriting entertainment, there will probably be no entertainment in the sanctuary but we are still looking into it since our resources are also limited. If you know anyone who would be willing to provide entertainment free of cost, please contact Ellen or Jack. Volunteers are always needed but we will probably have a sign-up poster available later in the year. Attendance is not required but it is certainly wonderfully up-lifting. See you there.



Each month, *The Beacon* reports who is sponsoring the flowers in the Sanctuary. December's flowers:

- 04 - The glory of God
- The pedestal flowers are presented by Doris Jones
- 18 - In memory of Sandy & Joe Stauffer & in honor of Donna & Sterling Krout by Sara, Maggie, Kelly & Jud Stauffer
- 24 - In memory of Bernice & Clark Jacobs by the Jacobs family
- 25 - In memory of Cheslin & Lottie Wagner by Dean & Linda Anderson

January's Flowers are not posted yet

December Celebrations



- 02- Grant Stanley
- 02- Sharon Stein
- 03- Carol Coeyman
- 03- Grayson Frey
- 03- Megan Knaub
- 05- Keith McCleary
- 05- Emeline Osterhaus
- 05- Ofelia Osterhaus
- 06- Jessica Johnston
- 07- Scott Hildebrand
- 07- Madison Ruth
- 08- Carolyn Noll

- 08- Andrea Sprenkle
- 11- Karen Traina
- 13- Jennifer Golden
- 13- Kevin Shaffer
- 15- Cindy Strobeck
- 16- Blaine Howard
- 17- Josie Flory
- 17- Jamie Golden
- 18- Angie Kicas
- 18- Krista Kiehner
- 18- Gary Krout
- 21- Markley Krout
- 21- Brayden Krout
- 21- Samuel Hont
- 25- *The Holy Child*
- 26- Chris Jacobs
- 29- John Jones
- 29- Amy Shoffner
- 31- Paul Vigna

Wedding Anniversaries

- 26- Dee & Tom Kerr
- 27- Shelley & David Fishel



Pastor Debbie is available for an office visit or would welcome the opportunity to visit you. Please call as needed at 717-503-2729. God Bless!



Pastoral Acts

Pastor Debbie made eight visits last month.



The Beacon is brought to you by:

- Chris Jacobs, Editor/Staff Writer
- Jennifer Rudolf, Layout/Staff Writer
- Ellen Warntz, Proofreader
- Dee Kerr, Proofreader

December

Notes

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 7 pm Graceful Women	2	3
4 9 am Contemporary Worship 10 am Christmas Carols Study 10:45 am Traditional Worship 12 pm Advent Skit Practice	5 5:30 pm Girl Scouts 6 pm Music & Worship	6 6:15 pm Praise Team Practice 6:30 pm Mug Club	7 12:15 pm Midweek Bible Study 6:30 pm Choir Practice 7 pm Advent Service 7:45 pm Bells Rehearsal	8 6:30 pm Council Meeting	9	10
11 9 am Contemporary Worship 10 am Christmas Carols Study 10:45 am Traditional Worship 12 pm Advent Skit Practice	12 5:30 pm Girl Scouts	13 6:15 pm Praise Team 6:30 pm Finance Committee	14 12:15 pm Midweek Bible Study 7 pm Advent Service	15 6:30pm Book Club	16	17
18 9 am Contemporary Worship 10 am Christmas Carols Study 10:45 am Traditional Worship 12 pm Advent Skit Practice	19 5:30 pm Girl Scouts	20 6:15 pm Praise Team Practice 6:30 pm Mission and Discipleship	21 12:15 pm Midweek Bible Study 6:30 pm Choir Practice 7 pm Advent Service 7:45 pm Bells Rehearsal	22	23	24 5 pm Contemporary Christmas Eve Service 10:45 pm Traditional Christmas Eve Service
25 Christmas! 10 am Combined Worship Service	26	27 6:15 pm Praise Team Practice	28 12:15 pm Midweek Bible Study	29 6:30pm Mug Club	30	3 5 pm New Year's Eve Celebration