



**GRACE  
LUTHERAN CHURCH**

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# Grace for Today

DECEMBER 24, 2014—JANUARY 6, 2015 • VOLUME 13, NO. 26

**END OF YEAR GIVING**.....by Pastor Ken Gibson

As I went to write this article, a bit earlier than usual due to the holiday printing schedule, I stopped by my office mailbox. Therein were four requests from different ministries/charities requesting that I consider an end of the year gift to these causes. To be honest, I gave each a very quick glance and then I thought to myself: “No, I am going to make my end of the year gift to Grace Lutheran, Woodstock.” Now, this has become a bit of a regular practice for Jodi and I as it is a way of stretching our giving to the ministry and the mission that we have come to share with all of you, a sort of true charitable THANK YOU gift to all that we love so dear.



Now then, let me ask all of you who are able, to consider doing something similar. Say; “Yes! Amen! & Thanks Be to God,” by making a special gift to our Church, as this year draws to a close. I know that if I were asking for a special ministry outside our walls we would come through with flying colors, so let me ask for our beloved Grace ministry. For it is from this place, Grace Lutheran Church and her people, where all the other ministry flows. There truly is still time to make such a gift and I do ask you all to consider making such happen.

As it is mid-month while I write this, I am aware that the budget process is in full swing and I am also aware that extra gifts will be needed to make our budget come in and not have us start 2015 in a deficit. Last year at this time I was just as concerned and we all came through together to close the budget gap.

On another note, on behalf of Jodi and I, we say “thank you” for all the wonderful cards and special Christmas goodies and gifts that so many of you have sent or given to us. We love you so much! Merry Christmas to you all and a very Blessed New Year!



**WOMEN’S RETREAT 2015**— All women of Grace Lutheran are invited to join together as we explore Personal Peace, Community Peace, and Peace for the World with Rev. Amy Current from Wartburg Theological Seminary. The retreat takes place on **January 24** from 9am—3 pm at The Gardens of Woodstock. Early registration fee is \$40, after **December 31**, the fee is \$45. Morning coffee and juice, and a catered lunch are included. Sign-up and registration forms are located in the Women’s Retreat binder at the Information Center. Please contact Jodi Gibson with any questions at 815-527-7215.

**SIMPLY GIVING**—Do you know about Simply Giving? Simply Giving is a confidential, no charge, automatic withdrawal program; and it is one option available for giving tithes and offerings. Simply Giving provides an option to give on a regular basis (weekly, bi-monthly, or monthly). Enrollment forms to sign up are available at the Information Desk, and on Grace’s website (under “Communication and Documents,” then “Forms & Documents”). As in our giving and our annual estimates of giving, if your situation changes, automatic giving through Simply Giving can be changed by contacting the church office. Automatic gift amounts can be changed, or put on hold with one week’s notice. Please feel free to contact the pastors or church office with any questions about Simply Giving.

## WORSHIP TODAY

### **Sunday, December 28, 2014** **First Sunday of Christmas**

INTRODUCTION: In the psalm all the natural world praises God, including all humanity, male and female, young and old. The voices of Simeon and 84-year-old Anna join the chorus today, recognizing what God is doing in Jesus. Simeon's song is often sung after communion, for we have seen God's salvation in the assembled community and have held Jesus in our hands in the bread. Then, like the prophet Anna, we speak of Jesus to all who look for the healing of the world.

READINGS: Isaiah 61:10–62:3

Psalms 148

Galatians 4:4–7

Luke 2:22–40

### **Sunday, January 4, 2015** **Second Sunday of Christmas**

INTRODUCTION: Within the gospel reading's profound words lies the simple message that God is revealed in a human person. Though we may try to understand how the Word existed with God from the beginning of time, the wonder we celebrate at Christmas is that the Word continues to dwell among us. Christ comes among us in the gathered assembly, the scriptures, the waters of new birth, and the bread and the wine. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.

READINGS: Jeremiah 31:7–14

Psalms 147:12–20

Ephesians 1:3–14

John 1:1–18

**PRAYERS**—Please lift up these petitions in your prayers—To become a praying member of the Friends in Prayer, please submit name and e-mail address to [dklabunde@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:dklabunde@gracewoodstock.org).

**World:** Bishop Eaton, Bishop Wollersheim; those serving in military conflicts, Arusha Town Lutheran Parish in Tanzania (our companion parish), Scott Bunch serving in the military, Henry Trebes (friend of the Laird family), Army Reserves, deployed to Cuba

**Woodstock:** Pastor Ken Gibson and his family; Pastor Amanda Bergstrom and her family; Grace Staff; Grace Council

**Health Concerns:** Katie Arana, Marge Birk, Frank Bunch, Gloria & Ken DeRango (mother and step father of Brian Pilgard), Ken DeVogelaere, Marge Dierksen, Betty Dusthimer (sister of Diane Thurow), Juanita Dycus, Tannie Fiorina (mother of John Fiorina), Patrick Fraily (friend of August and Theo Hutchens), Maroulla Hahne (friend of Bill & Martha Fleck), Gloria Holy, Patrice Hoover, Mary Hurst (friend of Deborah Evanoff), August Hutchens, Theo Hutchens, Ruth Iwanicki, Christina Jaggi (friend of Adele Petersen), Donald Janavyak (friend of Shirley Berna), Fila Johnson (sister-in-law to Roberta Herzog), John Johnson (brother of Jerry Johnson), Vincent Lopez (father of Tom Lopez), Debby Lynd, Nancy McCormick (cousin of Martha Fleck), John McMahan, Gail Mueller, Jesse Myjak, Daniel Nattress, Herb Neubaum, Don Nusbaum, Carol O'Brien (sister of Bill Larsen), Gloria Ogle, Alice Pate, Shawn Rank (son of Bert & Carol Rank), Joshua Rumschlog (great grandson of Eileen Weide), Joan Russell (mother of Sheri Conover), Dick Schroeder, Ellen Schulz (daughter-in-law of Diane Schulz), Bob Shook, Margaret Stawicki (mother of Nan Goerlitz), Carol Thompson (daughter of Marge Dierksen), Josh Tillman, Brian Tobin (grandson of Enn Teetsov), Jerry Virgil (father of Melynda Mauer), Karen Wells, Jeannie Wilcox, Ruth Zirves

**Sorrows:** June Noel (mother of Marylee Steinwehe), Gertrude Cox (grandmother of Angie Ribbe), Helen Filetti (grandmother of Brent Filetti)

If you wish to add a prayer request for this newsletter, please call the church office at 815-338-0554. Your prayer concern will run for one week and may be renewed. Submissions to the *Friends in Prayer* e-mail and phone teams may also be submitted by telephone to the church office or by e-mail to [Gracewoodstock.org](mailto:Gracewoodstock.org). Due to confidentiality laws, hospitals no longer notify churches or pastors when a member is hospitalized. If you or a member of your family have a medical procedure planned or is admitted to the hospital, please call the church office at 815-338-0554.

**TRADITIONS: RECLAIMING AND RESHAPING.....**by Pastor Amanda Bergstrom

Whenever and wherever it is that you find yourself reading this issue of Grace for Today, may the peace of Christ be upon you, and may the light of Christ shine brightly in your lives. I pray your Christmas celebrations were/are filled with these great gifts: the peace and light of Christ.



This year I have been reflecting on the gift and challenge of traditions. Earlier in December I attended a Sankta Lucia breakfast at Jon’s parents’ congregation. I have enjoyed the opportunity to participate in this day a few times over the past several years, and each year I enjoy this tradition in a new way, as I don’t think I had ever heard of Sankta Lucia before meeting Jon! And yet, in his home congregation, and in many other homes and churches, the celebration of Sankta Lucia is a beloved and joyous time to celebrate with light, song, and sweet treats.

At this year’s breakfast, I was fascinated to observe and listen in on reactions to some of the variations in the program. Scripture was read, “Lucia,” the attendants, and starboys processed in the same way, we sang Christmas hymns in English and Swedish, the menu was the same and delicious; but there was also a new techno/pop song and a comical skit this year. Being new to this tradition, I found it creative and bold for a church program to try something new; though others may not have been so delighted by something other than how it has always been done.

As I think of the great gift of traditions, it has been a joy to learn about and add this ‘new-to-me’ tradition to my Christmas celebrations. At the same time, I hold on to memories of other family traditions that have changed over the years. After gathering on Christmas Eve every year for over 25 years with my grandpa, uncle & aunt, and cousins; for the past few years we have been trying to find a different day to celebrate so that I can still join that gathering. The tradition of gathering with my sisters each Christmas morning came to an abrupt end as one sister moved out east and no longer comes home for the holidays. Traditions, in all their beauty and wonder, though they seem ever resistant to change, continually present an invitation to find ways to reclaim and reshape the ways in which we gather and remember.

Whatever it is you are used to or would like to celebrate; I pray that the traditions you hold, adapt, remember and treasure bring life and joy to you this year. For at the heart of it all, the source of these traditions is the incredible good news of Jesus’ birth. Away in a manger, in that little town of Bethlehem, on a silent and holy night, we have heard the angels on high, and we join the singing- joy to the world, the Lord is come! Merry Christmas!

**BREAD FOR THE DAY 2015**—Bread for the day is a daily-use devotional resource filled with rich treasures; such as a brief scripture reading, a prayer and hymn for each day and more. The devotions begin **January 1, 2015**. If you are interested in having a copy of the devotional they are available for purchase in the office for \$8.00.

**2015 BULLETIN & PRESENCE LIGHT SPONSOR SHEETS** are available at the Information Center. A month prior to your sponsoring, a form will be sent to you requesting information and a donation of \$20 for the Bulletins & \$10 for the Presence Light. Thank you for helping fund the weekly bulletins and presence lights.

**WINTER BLOOD DRIVE NEW DATE & TIME**—Many of us made new years resolutions to better serve God and help those in need. Here is a chance to help the ill & injured in our community. We will be holding a blood drive in the Narthex on **Wednesday, January 7 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.** Come and enjoy a good PrimeTime meal and fellowship and then come donate blood in the narthex and help to save up to three peoples lives with just one donation. Please contact Gretchen Hutchens @ 815-341-7544 or sign up in the narthex.

**FAMILY BOWLING EVENT**—Join us at Kingston Lanes on **January 10** from 1–4 pm for family bowling. Game proceeds and 10% of food/drink will help to support the Grace Preschool Tuition Assistance Program. Information, pricing, and sign-up slips are available in the Preschool or at the Information Center. RSVP by **January 8**.



**“CONNECTIONS CLASS IS AWESOME!”** - The above is a quote from Tammy Resek-Caccamo, one of the most recent participants in the last session of our small group Connections class. Tammy went on to say; “The class offered a chance to discuss God and God’s worlds and of our role as God’s people. *Connections* allowed me to get a better understanding of how our faith relates to every area of our life.”

“In *Connections*, we discuss how Martin Luther shows us how the Lord’s Prayer, The Apostles Creed and the Sacraments relate to our world today and further how the ten commandments apply to the decisions we make in our daily life.” In *Connections* we do all this in a very relaxed atmosphere with good discussions and even some wonderful desserts! All in all *Connections* is a wonderful small group ministry where we not only do some really in depth study but we also come to share and grow in relationships with a wonderful group of people in meaningful and spiritual ways.

Our *Connections* small group study will take a break for the Holiday season but we will start up again on January 12 meeting for six consecutive Mondays thru Feb 16. Watch for a sign-up sheet to be posted closer to the start of the next session. “See you at the next session!” says Tammy.



**SENIOR LUNCHEON – Tuesday, January 27** We are starting the New Year off with a delicious home cooked meal of Sweet Napa Salad, Chicken Stuffing Bake, Hawaiian Rolls and Pistachio Pudding Parfaits for dessert. Then we have a wonderful program on “Funeral Service Planning”, led by Pastor Ken, Pastor Amanda and Ron Fredriksen. This is something we all should do! Your Funeral Service should be a reflection of you, but so often our loved ones have no idea what we would have wanted. Cost is only \$5.00, so bring a friend. Please sign up in the Activity Binder by **January 25** Questions, call Shirley Busse at 815-338-9063.

**LABELS FOR EDUCATION & TYSON PROJECT A+ FUNDRAISERS**—By saving labels from both the Labels for Education and Tyson Project A+ Programs, you are helping our Preschool earn both bonus points and cash that we can redeem for classroom materials, gym & playground equipment as well as teaching aids for our teachers. Both labels can be dropped off in the Labels for Education basket located in the Educational Foyer (under the bulletin board, outside the preschool office) OR the small cardboard box found on the attendance sign-in desk. Each Tyson label will earn us 24 cents! Labels for Education are found on a variety of products and have a wide range of values. For a complete list of participating products, visit both websites: [www.labelsforeducation.com](http://www.labelsforeducation.com) and [www.projectaplus.tyson.com](http://www.projectaplus.tyson.com). Thank you for your help! NOTE: We are not able to participate in the Box Tops for Education program.



**PHOTO DIRECTORIES ARE IN**—If you had your photo taken last winter with us it’s time to pick up your photo directory at the information desk. Please take the one that is labeled for your family. If you did not have your photo taken with us, but would still like a copy of the photo directory they are now on sale at the Information Center for \$10.00. Questions call Carrie Fiorina in the church office, 815-338-0554.

**SAVE THE DATES**— Preschool Bowling Fundraiser—**Jan. 10**, Connections—**Jan. 12**,

**YOUNG ADULTS: OPPORTUNITY FOR SERVICE**—The ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission program offers young adults, ages 21-29, a transformative year of global service in one of more than nine countries. As they grow in their faith and worldview, they support ministries and projects in communities of need. Applications are due Feb. 15 for service beginning in August. Learn more at [www.ELCA.org/yagm](http://www.ELCA.org/yagm).

**THANK YOU**—To All of the Wonderful Members of Grace, On behalf of the people we are privileged to serve, we thank you so much for your generous donations of food (incredible!), hats and mittens and gift cards. We had over \$560 worth of gift cards alone! This is a huge piece of the work we do, and medications are getting harder for our patients to obtain. Your generosity will make this season memorable for many people who rely on us for their health care needs...you have always understood that the needy are always with us. It may not be nearly as obvious as in some cities, but so many in our communities are simply one paycheck away from a catastrophe. The access to health care—and we mean that in the widest possible sense—is incredibly important in giving people the dignity, strength and tools they need to help themselves and their families. Some of that anxiety and worry can be erased and that is because of you and what you've done for our patients. May your Christmas be filled with blessings and the knowledge that throughout our entire community, people are doing better because of you. Thank you. Sincerely, Suzanne Hoban, MPH, Executive Director, Family Health Partnership

**WANTED: SEVEN GREAT COOKS!** - Once again we have our Lenten Soup Lunches starting up on Ash Wednesday, **February 18** following the noon service. The lunch consists of a hearty soup, bread, desserts and beverages. We are in need of seven volunteers to prepare a batch of their favorite hearty soup, we also need some desserts. There is an information sheet in the front of the Activity Binder and a sign-up sheet in the Binder. Please sign up by the **end of January** so we can get a schedule posted. If you have any questions, please call Shirley Busse at 338-9063.

**GRACE PRESCHOOL**—Our preschool is in need of substitutes for this school year! If you have experience with young children and/or a background in early childhood education, please consider being on our sub list. Substitutes are a very important part of our preschool program. We are looking for people who enjoy being with young children ages 2 to 5. Duties will include helping the teacher supervise a classroom, playing and reading to the children, setting up classroom activities and some light cleaning at the end of the day. Hours are 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. All substitutes must have all DCFS required documents on file including a mandatory background check and physical exam. Contact Mrs. Chris for a sub packet or additional information. 815-338-0554 x 213 or [clearman@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:clearman@gracewoodstock.org)

**MMAGIC YARD SIGNS**—Please return all yard sign & stakes from Mistletoe Magic to Grace as soon as possible. These are reused each year and are expensive to replace. The dates are changed for each year. They may be placed under the coat rack by the bin marked for MMagic. Thanks!



**WE NEED YOUR STORIES**—Were you moved by the Pastor's sermon, or a choir's hymn? Not every church member can attend all services or events, and we want to hear about your experiences, so we would like you to share your stories here. You can also send a "View From The Pew". You may submit your articles to Lynn Nattress at [lnattress@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:lnattress@gracewoodstock.org). (Follow-up stories will run as time/space permit, and may be edited.)

**NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**—All *Grace for Today* articles for the **January 7** issue should be sent to Lynn Nattress at [lnattress@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:lnattress@gracewoodstock.org) or to the church office by noon on Tuesday, **December 30**.

Here is your link to the Weekend Worship Participants:

Schedule:<http://www.gracewoodstock.org/WeeklyNews/Monthly%20Worship%20Participants.pdf>

## THE WEEKS AHEAD AT GRACE

Visit the Grace website for the most up-to-date information for all that is happening at Grace!

### Saturday, December 27

9:00 AM Band  
5:00 PM Worship

### Sunday, December 28

8:30 AM Traditional Worship  
9:30 AM Sunday by Sunday Book Group  
10:45 AM Contemporary Worship

### Monday, December 29

7:00 PM Chancel

### Tuesday, December 30

Nothing Currently Scheduled

### Wednesday, December 31

Nothing Currently Scheduled

### Thursday, January 1

New Year's Day / Church Office Closed  
12:00 PM DAP

### Friday, January 2

10:45 AM Youth Group NE Conf Service Event  
11:30 AM Adoration  
5:00 PM Exultation

### Saturday, January 3

9:00 AM Band  
5:00 PM Worship

### Sunday, January 4

8:30 AM Traditional Worship  
9:45 AM Education Hour/Sunday By Sunday  
10:45 AM Contemporary Worship  
5:15 PM Youthful Spirit  
6:15 PM Hand Chime Choir  
6:30 PM Laudate  
6:45 PM Graceful Ringers

### Monday, January 5

9:00 AM Preschool 2s, 4s, 4s & 5s

### Tuesday, January 6

9:00 AM Preschool 2s, 3s, 4s & 5s  
6:45 PM All Committee Meeting Night

### Wednesday, January 7

9:00 AM Preschool 2s, 4s, 4s & 5s  
12:30 PM Staff Meeting  
5:00 PM Messengers  
5:15 PM 2 Year Old Class  
5:15 PM PrimeTime — Italian Beef  
5:30 PM Cherubs  
6:00 PM Confirmation  
6:00 PM Revelation Ringers  
6:15 PM Joyful Sound  
6:30 PM Grace Dance  
7:00 PM Chancel  
7:00 PM Graceful Dance

### Thursday, January 8

9:00 AM Preschool 2s, 3s, 4s & 5s  
12:00 PM Naomi Circle  
6:30 PM BSA, Sycamore District

### Friday, January 9

9:00 AM Preschool 4s,, 4s & 5s



## GRACE STAFF & COUNCIL

### Senior Pastor

Rev. Kenneth D. Gibson  
[kgibson@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:kgibson@gracewoodstock.org)  
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Home Phone: 815-527-7215

### Associate Pastor

**Director of Senior High Ministries**  
Rev. Amanda Bergstrom  
Cell Phone: 630-664-9016  
[abergstrom@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:abergstrom@gracewoodstock.org)

### Director of Communications

Lynn Nattress  
[lnattress@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:lnattress@gracewoodstock.org)

### Director of Music Ministries

Ron Fredriksen  
[rfredriksen@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:rfredriksen@gracewoodstock.org)

### Parish Musicians

Terry Aavang, Jan Burns, Dale Carlson,  
Tammy Baier, Carrie Filetti

### Director of Preschool Ministry

Chris Learman  
[clearman@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:clearman@gracewoodstock.org)

### Preschool Staff

Tammy Baier, Amy Flores, Julie LaGue,  
Nancy Mojica, Kristy Nellesen

### Director of Educational Ministries

### Office Assistant

Carrie Fiorina  
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### Director of Senior Ministries

Shirley Busse

### Secretary

Denise Klabunde  
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### Building Supervisor/Ken Zank

Custodians/Chris & Kim Ethridge

### Officers & Council

Cathy Buhrow; Mike Freeman; Robin Gibbs;  
Ken Hansing; Claude Hutchens; Sue Olsen;  
Peter Paulson; Rob Ribbe; Beth Millar;  
Daniel Nattress

[council@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:council@gracewoodstock.org)

Office Hours: 8:30 am–3:30 pm, M–Th  
8:30 am–12:00 pm, F