

DECEMBER 10, 2014—DECEMBER 23, 2014 • VOLUME 13, NO. 25

“CHRISTMAS TIME WHEN I WAS YOUNG, THE MAGIC AND THE WONDER”



Recently, with the help of Ron and Jan Fredriksen and Jan’s son Chris, I recorded me singing a John Denver song; A Baby Just Like You. (I invite you to listen to John Denver singing this at some point this season.) I then sent that recording to daughter Lauren for her to have and play for our grandson Lukas. It was, as you might imagine, a bit hard for me to sing without tearing up while I sang this beautiful song. It is so exciting to again share with a little one in our lives the true magic and wonder of Christmas. My hope is that this recording gift will be something that Lukas will have for many years to come even as I may no longer be here on this earth. This beautiful, almost lullaby of a song, speaks of the gift that this Savior King is to the entire world. It is my hope that Lukas knows his grandparents love him very much and that they are people of faith. I know of no greater gift to share with him than the greatest gift ever given to all the world, or as the song exclaims it:

*“A savior King was born that day, a baby just like you, and as wise men came with gifts, I come with my gift too.
That peace on earth fills up your time and brotherhood surround you;
that you may know the warmth of love and wrap it all around you.
It’s just a wish a dream I’m told from days when I was young,
Merry Christmas Little ‘Lukas Child’ Merry Christmas Everyone!”*

As we enter now into another Christmas celebrated together, I can think of nothing better than to share with all of you, as I do with Lukas, that you are loved and that true peace might make up your/our time together. Merry Christmas Children of God; Merry Christmas Everyone!

Pastor Ken Gibson

Show your support for... **GRACE LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL!**

Stop into Panera Bread® Woodstock on 12/12/2014 and 10-20% of qualifying sales as a result of your participation will be donated directly to Grace Lutheran Preschool.



DATE: Friday, December 12
TIME: 6am—9pm
LOCATION: Panera Bread® Woodstock 925 Country Club Rd.

Remember to present this flyer when ordering. Donation only valid at date, time and location specified above.

Schedule your next fundraiser online! Visit www.panera-chicago.com

Owned and operated by HAMRA Enterprises, a Panera Bread franchisee



BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS—The Spirituality Team and Nancy Kreznor will be offering free blood pressure checks in the narthex between Sunday services, 9:30—10:30 am. The next date for 2014 is **Dec 21.**

WORSHIP TODAY

Sunday, December 14, 2014 **Third Sunday of Advent**

INTRODUCTION: "Rejoice always," begins the reading from First Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. "All God's children got a robe," go the words of the spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes that make us feel happy just to put on. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God's party.

READINGS: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Psalm 126

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

John 1:6-8, 19-28

Sunday, December 21, 2014 **Fourth Sunday of Advent**

INTRODUCTIONP: God keeps the promise made to David, to give him an everlasting throne. The angel tells Mary that God will give David's throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel's greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, "Count me in." We who know that Jesus is called king only as he is executed still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary today we hear the news of what God is up to and say, "Count us in."

READINGS: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

Luke 1:46b-55

Romans 16:25-27

Luke 1:26-38

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.

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, Gertrude Cox (grandmother of Angie Ribbe), 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, 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), Debbi Lynd, Nancy McCormick (cousin of Martha Fleck), John McMahon, 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) 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: Brad Hahn (son of Pat and Bob Hahn), Rev. Roger Olson (father of Terese Paulson)

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. 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.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?.....by Pastor Amanda Bergstrom

In the story of The Best Christmas Pageant Ever a church Sunday school prepares for the annual Christmas pageant, without the guidance of their usual director, and with the surprising presence of an unruly group of kids, the Herdmans. The Herdmans had never heard about Jesus, or his birth, so as they join the rehearsals, the children hear the Christmas story for the first time.



At one point, Alice, a bit of a know-it-all who always plays Mary, chimes in to say, "I know what the angel said. She said . . . "His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."” Imogene Herdman, who claimed the role of Mary in this year’s pageant, replies, “My God! He’d never get out of the first grade if he had to write all that!”

As we draw near to Christmas this year, and hear the good news of Jesus’ birth once more, we wonder what’s in a name, Jesus, of what’s with all these other names, Messiah, Savior, Light of the World, Christ. Names carry meaning, and they might identify us with our family of origin. We hear Jesus’ name as the one foretold by the angel, and in the many other names we call Jesus, we hear a fulfillment of prophecy and descriptions of who Jesus is.

Jesus is wonderful, our counselor and confidant, son of and one with God, and Jesus ushers in true and lasting peace. This year, as you hear the Christmas story, whether for the first or the hundredth time, I invite you to listen for these words, these names for Christ, and listen for their meanings, hear anew the good news they tell of Jesus.

BETHEL CHRISTMAS STORE—Volunteers are still needed to help run the Christmas Store at Bethel on Saturday, **December 13th** from 12:30-3:30. We will carpool from Grace about 10:30. Adults and children 12 and older are welcome. There are many different areas in which to work: cashier, stocker, shopper aid, nursery, welcome desk and gift-wrapping. Sign-up on the Activity Board. For more information contact Denise Hoover at denisehvr@yahoo.com, or 815-260-3698.

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 15th**, 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.

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS —Help provide decorations for our sanctuary this Christmas. Give a gift in “honor of someone” or “in memory of a loved one” or “to the glory of God.” Forms are available at the Information Center in the Narthex. All forms and donations of \$12.00 are due by **December 15**. Following our 10:00 a.m. service on December 25 poinsettias may be taken home or to our shut-ins.

SENIOR LUNCHEON - Tuesday, **December 18** (3rd Tuesday) Join us for our fabulous Christmas Party! Our Christmas Dinner begins with a Sweet Potato Salad with Candied Nuts, followed by Oven Roasted Spatchcock Chicken and Potatoes, Applesauce and rolls. For dessert we have a festive looking cherry dessert. After this wonderful meal we will have some fun with a “Recycled Gift Exchange”. Please bring a wrapped new or slightly used gift to swap for something better – you hope! Cost is only \$5.00, so bring a friend. Please sign up in the Activity Binder by **December 16**. Questions, call Shirley Busse at 815-338-9063



LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE—On Sunday, December 21, at 5pm Redeemer Lutheran church will host a service called “*The Longest Night: A Service of Hope and Remembrance*,” with the help of their friends from Grace Lutheran, First Presbyterian, and St. Ann’s Episcopal churches. For those struggling with grief, illness and other issues, the Christmas season can be a difficult time. This simple service acknowledges this reality, while focusing hope and belief on Jesus as the Light of the World. Please consider joining us all!

GRACE OFFERS FOUR WORSHIP SERVICES TO ENRICH YOUR CHRISTMAS EXPERIENCE

The musical strains of “O Come, All Ye Faithful” will greet us in four different services as we again come together to welcome the coming of our Savior, a babe born in a stable shed. These services each include the telling of the most famous of stories as found in Luke. They will provide a time to gather round the table that signifies the gift this baby ultimately gave us. Each of these service offerings are unique.



Our family service at 4:30 pm is preceded by a recital of Christmas music provided by many of the youth in our church family. Come early and get a good location in the sanctuary to hear this outpouring of celebration that we plan to begin at 4 pm. As we move into worship we will be lead by our singing and ringing choirs age 4 through grade 8 in the best known Christmas carols as well as anthems the choirs present as their offerings to the Christ child. Pastor Ken has his own musical gift for all who gather for the Children’s sermon at 4:30 as well.

At 7:30 we add a contemporary finish to these familiar carols as we are lead in song by Laudate, our high school choir. We also welcome former singers who along with our regular contemporary band will swell the ranks of voices and lift our combined praise for God’s great gift. Andi Learman, also a returning college student will provide a dance component as Laudate portrays in song that stillness into which Jesus came through the anthem “Silent Was the Night .

As Christmas Eve turns to Christmas Day, Grace offers its traditional, full liturgical service at 11 pm preceded by a recital including Grace’s harpist Olivia Kaspryk . Featured is the carol “What Child is This” that will combine harp and hand chimes. Chancel Choir will present four choruses from the cherished Christmas Oratorio “Messiah” by Handel culminating with “Hallelujah Chorus”. Those who have sung this uplifting anthem affirming the reign of the Triune God are invited to join the choir as together we conclude our celebration of Eucharist and then, looking forward to the rest of the story, recess together singing “The First Noel”.

Our final Christmas service is on Christmas Day at 10 am. The service is informal. There are no service folders and the congregation chooses the carols to be sung as the service progresses. Communion and a message are included. Returning vocalist Laura Miller will lead the singing of the carols and provide solos focusing on the great event we have anticipated throughout our Advent journey. So come, let us adore Him, Hallelujah!

WHILE WE WAIT- ADVENT LECTIO DIVINA & PRAYER SPACE—On Wednesday **December 17** you are invited to gather in the parlor at 6 p.m. for sacred prayer; “While We Wait”. Whether you are waiting for Holden Evening Prayer to begin, or you are waiting for children or a significant other as they meet for a choir rehearsal or confirmation class, you are welcome to wait together in prayer in the parlor. At 6 p.m. Pastor Amanda will guide us in a time of *lectio divina*, sacred reading of scripture. This will be a time for meditation and prayer, silence and listening. At 6:30 p.m. the space will be open for continued individual prayer or reflection. Come take a few deep breaths, be still, and settle in -whether for the whole hour, or for just a few minutes.

MITTEN TREES—NEW mittens, hats, gloves, scarves, socks, and underwear are being collected again this winter for families in Woodstock. Please bring the items to church by **Dec. 21** and hang them on the mitten trees in the narthex/lower level. Thank you for your donations! If you have any questions, please contact Ellie Thurow.

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.

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

PREPARE THE WAY; CARRYING OUR FAITH INTO THE FUTURE UPDATE.....by Bill Nattress



You may have noticed the new banner hanging in the narthex announcing our capital campaign; Prepare the Way. I found the timing of this quite appropriate as the scriptures this past weekend had that very theme. As we prepare for Christ's arrival this holiday season the members of the Capital Campaign Task Force are also putting the final plans together for reaching out to all of the congregation members for their commitments to the campaign. We wish to thank those that have made the initial commitments to the campaign. At this time we have pledged commitments of **\$248,500** of which **\$141,506.90** has already been received.

With these initial monies the Task Force has begun working with the associated Church committees on some of the first projects to be completed in the early part of 2015. This work will begin while we reach out to every member of the congregation to personally request their commitment to the campaign. The list of projects is manageable but rather extensive, all things very much in need for our building and programs. We ask that you begin thinking about how you may be able to support this campaign as we Carry Our Faith Into the Future.

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH—A GIVING COMMUNITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

MISTLETOE MAGIC FINANCIAL UPDATE AND THANK YOU—Our benefit was blessed to raise \$23,816. This is an increase of \$2,333. over last year. The money will benefit those who seek services from Turning Point of McHenry County, Direct Assistance Program (DAP) and the Wednesday Night Homeless Shelter in Woodstock. Thanks to everyone for your continued support of this ministry. The Grace Lutheran Church family certainly knows how to "Share God's Grace" with the neighbors in our community. Thanks to: The luncheon crew, Hostess and servers, Greeters, Coffee Nook Hostesses, Kitchen crew, (yes, dishes need to be washed and dried) Cashiers, baggers, cart ladies, Bankers, Shopping Assistants, and Shoppers. Set up and take down crew, table dressers, decorators, pricers and all of the display persons who toil to make everything look "just so". All of the persons who have labored all year creating beautiful merchandise to sell. Woodworkers, Sewers, Crafters, Felters, Knitters, and Crocheters. Pet's Unlimited, the 18 inch doll clothes, the wonderful children's section, including imaginative play clothes and baby items. Our fantastic accessory and jewelry department and the ever successful Donation Table Crew. Gourmet Foods including Fair Trade and all of you who baked for our wonderful Bake Sale and Cookie Walk! You continue to take ownership, and always come up with ideas to make everything the best! We thank you for sharing your God given talent with us. Much thanks goes to our wonderful staff, especially, Ken Zank, Denise Klabunde and Carrie Fiorina for all of their help in coordinating and support throughout the year. Thanks to Ron Fredriksen and his team for the extra effort in creating the videos to lift this ministry and for his entertainment during the luncheon. Thanks to Lynn Nattress for handling the PR and to our devoted Pastors who continually lift up this ministry during worship. To the wonderful leadership team of Judy Reilly, Karen Reinhard and Sue Aavang I express my deepest thanks for your leadership, talent and commitment to the vision of Mistletoe Magic!

Warmly, in God's Grace— Cathy Meyer and Sue Aavang, Karen Reinhard, Judy Reilly (Co-Chairs)

CHRISTMAS FAMILY SHARING—Thank you, thank you, thank you! Thank you for your most generous support of the Christmas Family Sharing ministry. Together we collected more than 235 gifts for the Bethel Christmas Store and over \$1000 in Aldi gift certificates that will be used to help provide Christmas dinners. We also collected 53 Walmart/Target gift cards and 12 boxes of food for the Family Health Partnership Clinic. That is more than double the food we collected last year. Thank you for helping to Share God's Grace. Merry Christmas!

COOKIE DISTRIBUTION AT THE LIGHTING OF THE SQUARE—The Evangelism Committee would like to thank everyone that helped to bake the 800 delicious sugar cookies as well as those that helped to distribute them at the Lighting of the Square. The cookies were well received, and our visitor attendance was quite high for the weekend following. Thank you to all!

THE WEEKS AHEAD AT GRACE

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

Daily: Mitten Tree through December 21st

Saturday, December 13

9:00 AM Band
9:00 AM Spirituality—Homebound Baskets
5:00 PM Worship

Sunday, December 14

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, December 15

9:00 AM Preschool 2s, 4s, 4s & 5s
6:30 PM Boy Scout Troop 153

Tuesday, December 16

9:00 AM Preschool 2s, 3s, 4s & 5s
12:00 PM Senior Luncheon

Wednesday, December 17

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 — Spaghetti
5:30 PM Cherubs
6:00 PM Confirmation
6:00 PM Revelation Ringers
6:00 PM While We Wait—Advent Prayer Space
6:15 PM Joyful Sound
6:30 PM Grace Dance
7:00 PM Advent Midweek Service
7:30 PM Chancel

Thursday, December 18

9:00 AM Preschool 2s, 3s, 4s & 5s
12:00 PM DAP
12:00 PM Naomi Circle
6:30 PM Preschool Christmas Program
7:00 PM Council

Friday, December 19

7:00 PM Youth Group Christmas Lock-in

Saturday, December 20

9:00 AM Band
9:00 AM Evangelism Bread Baking
5:00 PM Worship
6:00 PM Fair Trade Coffee

Sunday, December 21

8:30 AM Traditional Worship
9:30 AM Blood Pressure Checks
9:30 AM Fair Trade Coffee
9:45 AM Sunday By Sunday Book Club
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, December 22

7:00 PM Chancel

Tuesday, December 23

Nothing Currently Scheduled

Wednesday, December 24

4:30 PM Christmas Eve Family Service
7:30 PM Christmas Eve Contemp. Service
11:00 PM Christmas Eve Traditional service

Thursday, December 25

Christmas / Church Office Closed
10:00 AM Christmas Day Service

Friday, December 26

Church Office Closed
11:30 AM Adoration



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