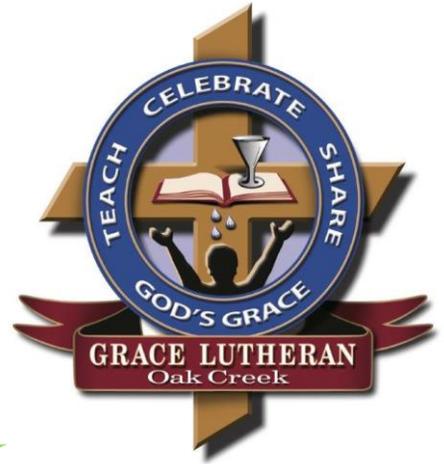


Equippier

Equipping God's people as we celebrate, teach, and share God's Grace.



December 2020



Big & Tiny

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." (John 1:1-3)

Advent for us starts where it always has—with the One who created everything. It starts with God the Father, who made us and loved us—and with God the Son, who came to be our Savior Jesus. It also starts with the Holy Spirit, who gives us faith and life in Jesus.

But, it also starts with you in all of your tininess—somebody sitting in a comfortable chair reading in the lamplight. A parent putting the little ones to bed with a prayer and a story about Jesus. A driver with your eyes on the road, watching out for hazards while the back of your mind is preoccupied with work or errands. You are a single speck of human life among billions of others on a troubled planet in an ordinary galaxy of the immense universe. And yet Advent is about you, because you are the reason Jesus came.

You matter to Him. God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God—why should He care about you? And yet He does. He has told you so: *"Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows"* (Luke 12:6-8).

So here we are, in Advent—watching and praying and marveling as we see how the great God Himself, the Most High, comes down to us as a tiny baby Himself, dependent on us for nursing and diaper-changing and holding and singing to sleep. And we rejoice, because we too depend on Him who grew up and suffered and died and rose again for our sakes. Because He loves us, our tiny lives have become infinitely meaningful. He has made us the adopted children of God Himself.

THE PRAYER:

Dear Father, thank You for sending Your Son. Thank You that we matter to You. Amen.

See You in Worship,
Pastor John M. Taggatz

Advent Devotions from Lutheran Hour Ministries-"God with Us"

What better news is there than to know that God is always by our side! In *God with Us*, we learn again what God the Father has done-He has kept His promise. In so doing, He has announced that grace and forgiveness are available to all, freely given in the birth of Jesus: God's Son, our Savior. He is Immanuel, "God with us."

The story of God coming to earth as a human child is a profound one. In *God with Us*, we find no aloof divinity who is unconcerned and remote somewhere in the cosmos. Rather, He is deeply involved in all our affairs-our joys as well as our heartaches. He *knows* us for He became one of us. At Christmastime, we celebrate the birth of Jesus, Lord of the universe, Savior of the world, Shepherd of our lives. These special Advent Devotions will be available in the Church Sanctuary at Grace, which will include our Holiday Worship times at Grace. Please feel free to pick one up and share it with a neighbor, coworker, friend, or family member to invite them to worship with us at Grace during this Holiday Season as we celebrate the birth of our dear Savior Jesus Christ. To find these devotions on the internet please go to: <https://www.lhm.org/advent/>

What is Advent?

The church divides the year into different seasons that emphasize the life of Christ and the life of the church. Beginning on Sunday, November 29, 2020, we will enter the season of the church year called Advent. Advent is the season of preparation and anticipation leading up to Christmas, and continuing to Epiphany January 6th, 2021.

Thursday, Dec. 3rd 6:30pm-Advent Midweek 1

"O Come, Wisdom" Isaiah 11:2

Thursday, Dec. 10th 6:30pm-Advent Midweek 2

"O Come, Adonai" Isaiah 33:22

Thursday, Dec. 17th 6:30pm-Advent Midweek 3

"O Come, Branch of Jesse" Isaiah 11:1

Christmas Eve Services-Thursday, Dec. 24th 4pm, 5:30pm

"O Come, Key of David" Isaiah 22:22

Friday, Dec. 25th 9:30am w/Communion-Christmas Day

"O Come, Dayspring" Isaiah 9:2

Thursday, Dec. 31st 4:00pm-New Year's Eve

"O King of the Nations, You Have Come" Matthew 2:2



Please note the time change for our New Year's Eve service. We hope this will give some of our members the opportunity to begin their celebration with us in worship before heading off to other events.



How Stephen Ministry Works

The Stephen Minister steps in "AFTER" things in your life seem to go astray and you need someone to talk with that will walk with you through this time of need.

A free and **confidential** service, Stephen Ministry serves people who are struggling with a special need or going through a difficult time. They are paired with lay persons who have been trained as Stephen Ministers to offer Christian support and care. This is someone who is going to walk along beside you, is going to hold your hand the whole way. If you just want to sit there and cry, that's fine. If you want prayer, they will pray, but they're not going to come and hit you over the head with a Bible.

Stephen Ministry is helping people walk through a difficult time in their life and showing them Christian care. It is what the church is supposed to be.

The ministry itself works like this:

Pastors, church staff and lay leaders attend a one-week Leader Training Course, taught by the Stephen Ministries at a St. Louis facility to learn how to implement and direct the Stephen Series in their congregations. These trained Stephen Leaders then return home to set up and administer Stephen Ministry in their congregations.

The Pastor in a congregation simply can't provide all the care that is needed, so basically we are an extension of pastoral care.

Stephen Leaders recruit and select lay people from a congregation to serve as Stephen Ministers and provide them with 50 hours of Christian care giving training in the congregation, and as long as they are a Stephen Minister they get continued education at their monthly meetings.

Some of the training topics include **listening**, feelings, assertiveness, **confidentiality**, and ministering to people in specific situations such as childbirth, divorce, terminal illness and grief and much more. Stephen Ministers are also trained to recognize when a care receiver's needs go beyond the care a Stephen Minister can provide, and where and how to refer the care receiver for additional care.

A very key training module is what we call **process** versus **results**. We are there to perform a caring process--to listen and care-- not to try to "fix things" or push for results. We are the care givers; **GOD is the cure giver**.

After the Stephen Minister is commissioned, Stephen Leaders link them with a care receiver--a member of the congregation who is in need of quality Christian care.

Stephen Ministry is not just for people in our congregation but also it is a community outreach program. We sometimes get referrals from churches in other parts of the city or if someone moves we will find a Stephen Minister in their new town.

Stephen Ministry continued...

Stephen Ministers normally are assigned to only one care receiver at a time and meets with the care receiver for an average of about an hour each week. Stephen Ministers also meet once a month for peer supervision and continuing education. The quality of training Stephen Ministers and Leaders receive is outstanding.

Stephen Ministry is also a godsend for pastors and other church staff. Stephen Ministers are not there to take the place of the pastoral staff, they are an extension of our ministry that can provide more one-to-one support, than a pastor could ever support. There are people who need an opportunity to heal and to recover and receive support for a more extended period of time. Stephen Ministers are not counselors, they are trained **listeners** and caregivers. Those who stand to benefit most from Stephen Ministry are the care receivers. Having someone to talk to, walk alongside, in **confidentiality**, during life's crises, both big and small, can make the journey a little smoother. (Written by a pastor)

If you are going through an emotional or spiritual struggle, it's going to come out in a physical way. It can make you not cope as well. Stephen Ministry is here to help you physical being and well as your spiritual and emotional being and Stephen Ministry is here to help meet those needs. Some folks are unsure about seeking care and wonder whether a strong person should need to ask for care. God sent us to help one another, Stephen Ministry is on way God provides that care.

Our Stephen Ministry at Grace has been going on since 2004. We have 5 Stephen Leaders. They are Jeanne Meyer, Lisa Kamprath, Lori Kachelmeier, Chris Cotter & Pastor Taggatz.

Our Stephen Leaders are also Stephen Ministers and we have 9 Stephen Ministers: Pat Lemmer, Gail Olen, Bob Morgan, Jan Barrett, Donna Wenzel, Beth & Dick Jackson, Adam Voss or Pauline Parker.



GIVING TO GRACE THROUGH THE THRIVENT CHOICE PROGRAM

—When you're ready to make an impact on the causes and nonprofits you care most about, we're here to help. Through our Thrivent Choice® program, you can make a personal donation or direct Thrivent Choice Dollars® to more than 40,000 churches and nonprofits.

Eligible members can recommend where Thrivent distributes a portion of its charitable funding by directing Choice Dollars®. Members become eligible for Thrivent Choice based on insurance premiums, contract values and Thrivent volunteer leadership.

*****Special notice regarding the Thrivent Choice Program:**

Thrivent members wishing to continue their automatic withdrawal to the charity of their choice will have to let Thrivent know either by e-mail or phone. All you have to do is call this 1-800 number in order to see if you have Thrivent Choice dollars to give. To continue to direct your Choice Dollars to the charity of your choice call: 800-THRIVENT (800-847-4836) and state "Thrivent Choice." **For More information on the Thrivent Choice Program please go to: <https://www.thrivent.com/what-we-offer/generosity/thrivent-choice.html>**

December Announcements

SUNDAY SCHOOL & BIBLE CLASS—Adult Bible Study will be held in the Entrance to our Church building from 9:15-10:15am. In the Adult Bible Study, we will be studying the Sunday morning Bible Readings for worship. Our Sunday School Students will be meeting in our Church Sanctuary from 9:15-10:15am. *Please sign up your children for Sunday School on the table to the entrance to our sanctuary, please also consider helping with Sunday School this year as a teacher or aide for this year. Let our Church Office know if you would like to help out with Sunday School this year.*

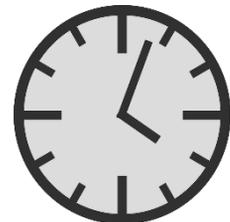
Call the church office at 414.762.8990...

- When a member of your family is admitted to the hospital, so a visit can be made by Pastor Taggatz.
- When your group plans to hold a meeting, so it can be cleared and placed on the church calendar.
- When your address, email, or your home or business phone number have changed, so church records can be corrected.
- When you are planning to move either out of town or locally.
- When you know you are pregnant so that we will be able to assist you in any way we can with prayers, encouragement and support.
- When a new baby arrives in your family and/or in the family of another church member.
- When you are planning a wedding or baptism.

REMINDER: If you have any announcements and/or additions for the *Equipper* please forward to Sarah Anderson at church@graceoakcreek.org by the 17th of each month.

Pastor Taggatz Office Hours

Monday 8:30 am-1:00 pm
Tuesday 8:30 am-1:00 pm
Wednesday 8:30 am-1:00 pm
Thursday 8:30 am-1:00 pm
Friday (Pastor's Day Off)
Visitations: Monday-Thursday afternoons



For appointments or emergencies, call church office or Pastor's cell phone.
Church Office: 414-762-8990
Pastor Taggatz: 715-467-1231

2021 Altar Flowers

- The sign-up sheet for 2021 Altar Flowers is posted on the white board in the narthex.
- Place your flower order directly with Parkway Floral: 414.762.0246
- Flowers should be brought or delivered to church before the Thursday service
- You can also supply your own arrangement. Rachel Miliacca will provide you with a vase liner.
- Your flowers will be refrigerated after the Thursday service so they will stay fresh for Sunday's services.



Your 2021 Grace Lutheran Offering Envelopes are available in the narthex of the Church. Please feel free to pick your envelopes up and we thank you for your continued support of our Church, School, and Early Childcare Center through the stewardship of your time, talents, and treasures! God bless you!

****Please do not use until January 2021.****

Grace Early Childhood Center Christmas Fundraiser

CHRISTMAS WREATHS

Order today - December 18th

Colors:
All red
All gold
Red and gold mix
or custom!



Order forms can be found in
the back of church or at ECC.

Grace Lutheran Early Childcare Center Christmas fundraiser for the year!

Our teachers and kids are excited to put wreaths together for you! Please check the display in the Narthex of the Church and order today before they sell out!

****We are able to ship!****

****We can add shipping costs to the total****

Stewardship Corner

If you find it difficult to remember to begin each day with a simple stewardship prayer - asking God how He wants you to share the gifts He has given you - you might want to let one of the Magi be your reminder.

The Magi - or three wise men - traveled far distances and made great sacrifices to bring gifts to Jesus. This year, before you pack away your nativity set, select one of the wise men bearing his gift for Jesus and set this statue in a place that you will see every day - maybe on your desk, your dresser or your kitchen counter. When you see this gift bearer let it be a reminder to ask Jesus what gifts He would like you to give for Him each day throughout the year.

And if someone asks why you have a Christmas decoration out, you can simply say that this little statue is reminding you to be more generous.

Volunteers Needed

We are looking for volunteers to be considered for training as Counters and Stand-by Counters, beginning in January. The counters work in pairs, so either individuals or a couple would be welcome. Each pair of counters is scheduled for one counting session per month that takes about 2 hours, usually on a Sunday after the late service, but the schedule can be very flexible. Complete training is provided and newly assigned counters are scheduled with experienced people. This is an important process in our church's administration, and we welcome interested members. If you would like more information, please contact Bev Buretta.

Email: bevburetta@yahoo.com

Phone: 414-764-2923

Text or call: 414-303-6565

Power Point Team

Pastor Taggatz is looking for a few people who are Power Point experts and would like to help him with running the power point during our worship services and possibly editing the power point slides for worship each week. If interested, please contact him directly.



Private Communion Service

We would like to encourage those that have not been attending worship services due to COVID-19 to come and partake in private communion. We will provide this service once per month starting on Monday, December 7 from 10:00am-12:00 noon. We have eight 15-minute time slots available so that you and/or your family can come and take communion. Social distancing and thorough cleaning will occur between each visit. Please contact Sarah Anderson Tuesday-Thursday between 8:15am-1:15pm to reserve your slot. If this date does not work for you please contact Pastor Taggatz directly at 715.467.1231.



GRACE TIME & TALENT SURVEY & COMMITMENT FORM

Please fill these out and bring to church or return it to the church office when convenient. I, as your Pastor ask that, as you approach your commitment decisions and how you can use your God given time, talents, and treasures for service in God's Kingdom and in His Church, you seek God's guidance in prayer. Let the love of God guide you in your decision.

"It Was so Simple"

What Christian ever tires of hearing the Christmas story? First, we hear about the Angel Gabriel. He was a busy guy, delivering messages from God. He must have enjoyed this task, though, because he was bringing good news. To Mary he said, *"You're going to have a son, and you shall call His name Jesus."* To Joseph, who understandably was a little unsure of how to proceed with Mary, Gabriel said, *"Don't worry Joseph. This is God's doing. Mary's going to have God's Son."* Simple, right? Just follow God's plan.

Then there's a decree from Caesar Augustus. He had no idea he was just a pawn in God's hands. As the powerful ruler he was, he issued a decree: *"Everybody has to go to his hometown to be registered for the census."* And everybody went, including Joseph and Mary. Even though Mary's pregnancy was quite advanced, she went on that arduous trip. Why not? She was in God's hands, too, although far from a pawn. She was God's channel. Through her God would bring to earth the greatest gift ever received.

Just in time, the innkeeper said they could stay in his barn – just in time for the birth. No hospital and no neonatal unit – God brought His Son into this world.



Some poor shepherds were out in the fields that night, just like most nights. But it wasn't like most nights, for the night sky filled with light as angels appeared and *"the glory of the Lord shone around them"* (Luke 2:9). Those shepherds looked and listened, and then they acted. *"Let's go see what God's been doing in Bethlehem,"* they said to each other, and they went. And they believed, and they told others what they had seen and heard and now believed.

Sounds simple, doesn't it? Not complicated like the world is today? Not exactly true. The world was complicated then, too. Political intrigue abounded; wars were being fought; the greedy still coveted more and more; some people then, as now, were too busy to see the angels or hear their message. But not everyone! Then as now, some will put aside the hustle and clamor. We'll slow down and listen for angels' wings, and we'll hear the message of *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!"* (Luke 2:14). We'll take time to peek into the manger and worship God's Son and we'll eagerly *"[make] known the saying that [has] been told [us] concerning this Child"* (Luke 2:17).



COMMITMENTS TO CHRIST AND OUR CHURCH

"Bearing Fruit for Jesus" (John 15:5)

I COMMIT TO BE FAITHFUL WITH MY TIME:

I will spend an average of _____ minutes per day in personal Bible reading over the next year.

I will attend _____ group Bible study(ies) per month.

I will faithfully worship _____ times per year.

I COMMIT TO BE FAITHFUL WITH MY TALENTS:

I will do the following _____

I COMMIT TO BE FAITHFUL WITH MY MONEY:

As a steward of God's resources, my/our percentage commitment to Him through my/our church will be _____ percent which is \$ _____ per week.

(Prayerfully consider the faith goal of tithing).

Name (s): _____

_____ (Please print)



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(Prayerfully consider the faith goal of tithing).

Name (s): _____

_____ (Retain this half of the form and return the other half on commitment Sunday).



*"Each one should use whatever gift
he has received to serve others,
faithfully administering God's grace in
its various forms"*
1 Peter 4:10

*"Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were
serving the Lord, not men..."*
Ephesians 6:7



**Service Opportunities at Grace
Lutheran Church, School, & ECC**
(Please check areas of interest)

- Church Boards/Committees**
 Communion Set-Up
 Christian Education Sunday
 Church Properties
 Council
 Board of Elders
 Finance
 Evangelism
 Stewardship
- Music**
 Instrumentalist
 Adult Choir
- Women's Ministry**
 LWML

Building Maintenance

- Carpentry
 Church Clean-up Day
 Handyman
 Heating/Cooling/Electrical
 Painting
 Plumbing

Care Ministry

- Adopt a shut-in
 Funeral Luncheons
 Prayer Chain
 Provide Transportation
 Visitation of homebound &
hospitalized
 Odds & ends projects for the
elderly
 Stephen Ministry

Children's Ministry

- Sunday School Teacher
 Substitute Teacher
 VBS Teacher

Worship

- Greeter & Usher
 Invite friends/inactive members
 Lay reader
 Offering Counter

Property Maintenance

- Landscaping
 Shrub Care
 Shoveling Sidewalks
 Mowing

Youth Ministry

- Chaperone
 Event Driver
 Youth Leader

Tell us about yourself!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Special Talents/Skills:



What is your current time availability?

- Once per month
 Twice per month
 Once per week
 Afternoons _____ Evenings
 Weekends only
 Project-Centered Commitment
 As needed



LADIES GUILD

Rise & Sonshine Bible Study

Ladies you are invited to join us this month for our Bible study.

December 12th

8:00 am at church

Our Way Home: A Journey through the Lord's Prayer by Daniel Paavola

Any questions, please contact:
Jennifer Olen 414.305.3740

Altar Guild

There are a few openings on the Linen Care and Communion Set-up team we are looking to fill for the upcoming year.

If you are interested in serving the Lord and Grace church in this way, please contact Jennifer Olen at 414.305.3740, olenjennifer@aol.com

Grace Ladies Guild Meeting

Saturday*December 12*10:00a.m.

At Church

- December ornament project
- Bring along your scissors



Socktober was a "Sock-suss"!

Thank you to everyone that donated to our sock drive for the Milwaukee Rescue Mission.

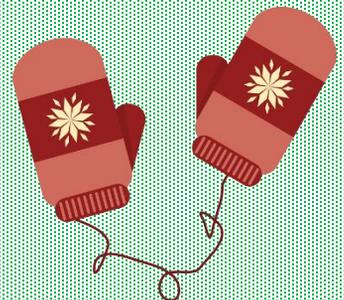
We donated 330 pairs of socks!

This will help so many people!



Mitten Tree

For the month of December, we will be collecting hats, scarves, mittens and gloves to keep others warm this winter. Items will be donated to South Milwaukee Human Concerns.



Adult Membership Class at Grace Oak Creek – “God Connects”

We are forming a new adult membership class. It will be on Sundays in January and February 2021 starting on Sunday, January 10th at 1pm and it will go till 3pm each Sunday until Sunday February, 7th, 2021. Whether you have questions about Christ or want to deepen your faith in Him, this class will explore what the Bible says about our God, and how His love gives direction and meaning to your life today and forever.

This class is designed for those who are interested in learning or reviewing the foundations of the Christian faith. Attendance at the class may lead to membership in our church, but there are no obligations. Please let us know if you need child care to attend this new members class. Watch an introductory video at www.lhm.org/GodConnects.

Also, members at Grace Lutheran, is there someone at work, in your neighborhood, or at your dinner table who is not a member of a Christian church and is weighing heavily on your heart?

Invite (or refer) a friend to our adult membership class! Feel free to talk to pastor if you would like ideas on how to craft your invitation. You can explain to them that *God Connects* is a video series explaining the Christian faith in a way that makes it easy to invite a friend, family member, or church visitor. *Please let them know the information about the class that is listed in the above paragraph.* Plain language and helpful illustrations present God’s work of salvation in a concise manner. This series is ideal for those with questions about sin, judgment, redemption, Jesus, the believer’s life, and more. *God Connects*—an excellent resource for amplifying and sharing key concepts of the Christian faith. Who has God put in your life that needs to hear His message?

Poinsettias for Christmas!

There will be 20 poinsettias placed this year.

In Honor/Memory of:

Greg & Gail Nowakowski
Barb & Mike Huber
Ron Savarino
Sandy Hamburger
Leah Abelt
Elizabeth Jackson
Suzie Mirenda
Connie McKeag
Dave Stecker
Mark & Jennifer Olen

Susan Olsen
Stan Gumm
Janice Barrett
Gail Olen
Rick & Cathy Weeks
Joe & Melissa Roberts
Brandon & Tricia Dachel
Heinz Poellet
Diane Pielsnik
Bernice Janes



Today's date: _____ Your name: _____

Name of person you are referring: _____

Indicate all that apply:

- Please pray for my friend.
- I am giving/sending my friend the **GodConnects** info card.
- I have invited my friend to join me at the next **GodConnects** class.
- My friend is committed to attending, so keep praying.
- I plan to attend the class with my friend.
- My friend is non-committal, so keep praying.
- My friend would enjoy a conversation with pastor or (other) _____.
Please call me about this at _____.
- Please call my friend directly at _____. She/He (circle one) is expecting your call.

Friend's Contact Information:

Address: _____ City and State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____ Preferred phone number: _____

Today's date: _____ Your name: _____

Name of person you are referring: _____

Indicate all that apply:

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Friend's Contact Information:

Address: _____ City and State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____ Preferred phone number: _____

Grace's Social Media Corner

Why is Grace Lutheran on Facebook and Instagram?

Aren't those just for funny cat videos and political rants?

We use these social media platforms to share the special things going on at church, school and the Early Childhood Center.

However, most importantly, we share on social media the Gospel of God's redeeming love!

We enjoy using this technology to continue the work of spreading the...
...Good News of God's Riches At Christ's Expense!

Join us in this work!

LIKE our page, and make sure you SHARE these messages with others too!



Facebook:

Grace Lutheran Church School & Early Childhood Center, Oak Creek, WI



Instagram:

gracelutheran_oakcreek

You can now give online. It's easy, fast, and secure. If you're able, we also encourage you to set up recurring giving. Thank you for supporting our mission. Text the word: [graceoc](https://www.graceoakcreek.org) to 206-859-9405, use this [QR Code](#) or head to our web-site: [graceoakcreek.org](https://www.graceoakcreek.org). You may give a onetime gift or set up your regular weekly/ monthly offering. Those using this method of giving may still bring their envelope if they wish and simply write 'online giving' on the outside and place it in the offering plate.)



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Gabe Dachel
- 1 Joanne Morgan☺
- 1 Jan Warmkessel
- 6 Dennis Iseli
- 7 Tim Kisley
- 8 Sienna Moeller
- 8 Gail Nowakowski
- 11 Chris Cotter
- 11 Sara Durant
- 11 Charlotte Klipfel
- 12 Richard Jackson
- 12 Madeline King
- 13 Michael Simmons
- 14 Rita Heinen
- 14 Ron Savarino
- 15 Kenneth Koehn
- 16 Mark Pulkownik
- 18 Glenn Dotson
- 21 Donna Smith
- 23 Carol Thurber
- 24 Laura Morrisette
- 24 Art Steinborn
- 28 Wyatt Hobart



Anniversaries

12/3 Mike & Kim Moeller



Radio Worship Service

"The Lutheran Hour" can be heard every Sunday Morning at 6:00 AM on WGN 720 AM, Chicago or at 6:30 AM on WTMJ 620 AM or at 11:00 am WRRD 540 AM, Milwaukee.

"The Lutheran Hour," which began in 1930, is the world's oldest continually broadcast Gospel radio program. This weekly half-hour program, now heard on more than 1,200 radio stations, pro-claims the message of Jesus Christ to a world-wide audience.



Prayer Hot Line



In order to request prayers by members of Grace, please contact one of the following people. Your request will be made known to all members if our Prayer Line. Prayer requests for worship service should be directed to the church office or Pastor Taggatz.

10AM – 3PM

Carol Thurber, 762-9615

3PM – 9PM

Pauline Parker, 764-5574

Internet Prayerline

Pauline Parker

paulinemom@aol.com

Grace Lutheran Church, School, ECC
8537 S. Pennsylvania Avenue • Oak Creek, WI 53154