

Grace Lutheran Church, School, ECC

Oak Creek, Wisconsin
www.graceoakcreek.org

*Celebrate
Teach
Share*

Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 24th, 2023

*"By His Grace you are saved through faith."
Ephesians 2:8*



Image: "And the angel [Gabriel] said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus." (Luke 1:30-31)

Welcome to Grace! We're Glad You've Joined Us!

WORSHIP NOTES FOR OUR GUESTS

Worship bulletins & worship activity bags (age 2-8) are available for your children to use during the service. Please see an usher if you need assistance finding them.

Children are **always** welcome - we don't want anything to keep families from attending! From time to time a child will naturally have a difficult moment in worship. If that happens and you feel a need to step out, please make use of our church narthex and entrance, so you may still be able to follow along in worship until your child is ready to return again!

If you would like to include a **prayer for someone** in our worship today, please add it to the **Prayer Request Sheet** found on the podium in the narthex.

We're glad you're with us. Please introduce yourself to Pastor Taggatz. If you are in search of a new church home, or are interested in learning more about Grace, we would be happy to visit with you. We hope you'll be back and give us an opportunity to know you!

As We Gather *"It's All about God's Plan!"*

Soon and very soon our waiting and planning for Christmas celebrations will come to their close, and we will rejoice in Christ's coming to save us. Such waiting and planning for Christmas can also guide us as we prepare for Christ's final advent, His ultimate coming, when He returns on the Last Day. Until that glorious Day, when all portions of God's plan for our salvation will be accomplished, we are blessed with the peace "*which surpasses all understanding*" (Philippians 4:7). Such peace is an amazing gift that the Lord gave to the virgin Mary, the mother of our Lord, when she received God's Word from the angel Gabriel. According to God's own amazing plan, Mary would carry our salvation in her womb and then, some nine months later, deliver Him into the world He would die and rise again to save. "*Let it be to me according to your word,*" she said, accepting the Lord's plan for her life (Luke 1:38). May we say the same today as we gather in the presence of our God.

We invite a moment of silence during the prelude for Prayer

As our organist begins the prelude we move from our regular conversations and the happenings of the world around us in order to turn our attention to worship. **Please take these moments as an opportunity to focus on prayer.** Make use of this time to look through our service in anticipation of the scripture we will share and the hymns we will sing. God richly bless us as we gather in God's presence today! We hope you will take these moments as a time to transition into worship as we have entered into God's presence through Word and Sacrament.

Order of Service...*Divine Service Setting 4, pg. 203*

✠ PREPARATION ✠

Opening Hymn 352 Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord (vs. 1-4)

Stand

Confession and Absolution *LSB 203*

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

P In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,
C **who made heaven and earth.**

P If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?
C **But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.**

P Since we are gathered to hear God's Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

C **Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.**

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

✠ WORD ✠

Introit (*Psalm 19:1, 4c, 5-6; antiphon: Isaiah 45:8a, b, read responsively*)

Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down | righteousness;*
let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may | bear fruit.
The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his | handiwork.*
In them he has set a tent | for the sun,
which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his | chamber,*
and, like a strong man, runs its | course with joy.
Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the | end of them,*
and there is nothing hidden | from its heat.

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy | Spirit;
as it was in the be- | ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.

Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down | righteousness;*
let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may | bear fruit.

Kyrie *LSB 204*

C Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

During Advent the Gloria in Excelsis is omitted...

Salutation and Collect of the Day *LSB 205*

P The Lord be with you.
C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray. Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C **Amen.**

Sit

Old Testament Reading *2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16*
(God's Covenant with David)

¹Now when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, ²the king said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.” ³And Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you.”

⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, ⁵“Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in? ⁶I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. ⁷In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?”’” ⁸Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. ⁹And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house...

¹⁶And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.’”

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Gradual (*Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26, alt., read responsively*)

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of | Zion.*

Shout aloud, O daughter of Je- | rusalem.

Behold, your king is com- | ing to you;*

righteous and having sal- | vation.

Blessèd is he who comes in the name | of the Lord.*

From the house of the Lord we | bless you.

Epistle Lesson *Romans 16:25-27*

(“To the only wise God be glory forevermore.”)

²⁵Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— ²⁷to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

- A This is the Word of the Lord.
- C **Thanks be to God.**

Stand

Alleluia and Verse LSB 205

- C **Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

Alleluia Verse for the 4th Sunday in Advent *"Alleluia. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel. Alleluia."* (Matthew 1:23a)

Holy Gospel Luke 1:26-38

(God reveals His eternal plan of salvation to the virgin Mary.)

- P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the first chapter.
- C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

³⁴And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

³⁵And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. ³⁶And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

- P This is the Gospel of the Lord.
- C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Apostles' Creed LSB 207

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Sit

Children’s Message “The Christmas Mystery Revealed” (Romans 16:25-27) The children of the congregation are invited to come up to the chancel area for a special message for them. Please note—parents of small children may also come up near the chancel area to accompany their children for the message)

Sermon Hymn 357 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (vs. 1-4)

Sermon “To God Alone Be Glory” (Romans 16:25-27)

Offering/Attendance

As the offerings are being passed to you by the ushers, we ask that you take this time to fill out the attendance pads located in your pews so that we can acknowledge your presence with us today. We are so glad that you have joined us in worship here at Grace!!! We also thank you for your generosity and support of Jesus Christ our Lord’s Kingdom work!!! God bless you!!!

You can now give online. It’s easy, fast, and secure. If you’re able, we also encourage you to set up recurring giving by texting **graceoc** to 206-859-9405, use this QR Code or head to our web-site at graceoakcreek.org. You may give a onetime gift or set up your regular weekly or 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.



Stand

Prayer of the Church (*After each petition the Pastor will say, “Lord in Your mercy,” and the congregation responds saying, “Hear our prayer.”*)

✠ SACRAMENT ✠

Preface *LSB 208*

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Lift up your hearts.

C **We lift them to the Lord.**

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

P It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, for the countless blessings You so freely bestow on us and all creation. Above all, we give thanks for Your boundless love shown to us when You sent Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, into our flesh and laid on Him our sin, giving Him into death that we might not die eternally. Because He is now risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity, all who believe in Him will overcome sin and death and will rise again to new life. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

Sanctus *LSB 208*

C **Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth adored;
Heav'n and earth with full acclaim shout the glory of Your name.
Sing hosanna in the highest, sing hosanna to the Lord;
Truly blest is He who comes in the name of the Lord!**

Prayer of Thanksgiving *LSB 209*

P Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. In Your boundless mercy You sent Your servant, John the Baptist, to proclaim that in Christ the kingdom of heaven draws near. With thankful hearts we pray, “Come, Lord Jesus,” confident that in His body and blood, given us to eat and drink, we receive the forgiveness of sins and so proclaim His death until He comes again in glory. Hear us as we pray in His name and as He has taught us:

Lord's Prayer *LSB 209*

- C** Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.

The Words of Our Lord *LSB 209*

- P** Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My T body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me." In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My T blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Pax Domini *LSB 209*

- P** The peace of the Lord be with you always.
C Amen.

Agnus Dei *LSB 210*

- C** 1 O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God,
You take the sin of the world away;
O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God,
Have mercy on us, Lord, we pray.
- 2 O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God,
You take the sin of the world away;
Have mercy on us, Jesus Christ,
And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.

Sit

Distribution

We celebrate the Lord's Supper

Members of our sister LC-MS congregations are invited to join us for communion. Guests to our Lutheran Church are invited to first speak with Pastor before joining at our Lord's Table. We hope you will learn more about us as we gather to "*Celebrate, Teach, and Confess*" the Good News of God's Grace! In the Bible, the Apostle Paul wrote: *Let a person examine himself and so eat of the bread, and drink of the cup (1 Cor. 11:28)*. Before attending the Lord's Supper, ask yourself the following questions:

1. *Do I believe that I am a sinner, and am sorry for my sins? (Prov. 28:13; Rom. 3:23; 1 John 1:8-9)*
2. *Do I believe that Jesus Christ by His death, offers me forgiveness for all my sins? (Romans 5:8; Col. 2:13; Heb. 9:28; 1 John 1:7)*
3. *Do I believe that I receive the body and blood of Christ in, with, and under the bread and wine (not merely symbolically present?) (Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 10:16; 1 Cor. 11:24-25)*
4. *Do I desire to turn from my sinful ways and live a God pleasing life by the power of the Holy Spirit? (Isaiah 1:16; John 8:11; Rom. 6:12)*

If you are unable to answer yes to these questions, please talk to the pastor before communing, as participating without a proper understanding of Holy Communion can be spiritual harmful (1 Cor. 11:27-29). If you can answer yes to these questions, then come with a repentant heart and join us in the reception of the Lord's Supper. Adults and children not yet instructed about Holy Communion are invited to come forward to receive a blessing.

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION PRACTICE—We are offering altar/rail communion as our communion practice. While you are at the altar, please let us know if you would like to receive the Common Cup. Individual communion cups are also available to you. You also have the option to kneel or remain standing during altar/rail communion. Gluten Free communion wafers are also available upon request. If it is physically difficult for you to commune at the altar rail, please speak to the Pastor or an elder about receiving communion in your pew.

Distribution Hymns

-357 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (vs. 5-7)

-354 Arise, O Christian People (vs. 1-4)

Stand

Nunc Dimittis LSB 211

C 1 O Lord, now let Your servant
Depart in heav'nly peace,
For I have seen the glory
Of Your redeeming grace:
A light to lead the Gentiles
Unto Your holy hill,

The glory of Your people,
Your chosen Israel.

2 All glory to the Father,
All glory to the Son,
All glory to the Spirit,
Forever Three in One;
For as in the beginning,
Is now, shall ever be,
God's triune name resounding
Through all eternity.

Post-Communion Collect *LSB 212*

- A Let us pray. We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have accomplished Your plan of salvation in the coming of Jesus Christ, our Savior and King. As You have filled us with the peace of sins forgiven, inspire us to share this blessing with others, that they, too, may know Your love and salvation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C **Amen.**

Benedicamus *LSB 212*

- A Let us bless the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

Benediction *LSB 212*

- P The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and T give you peace.
C **Amen.**

Closing Hymn 349 Hark the Glad Sound (vs. 1-4)

Announcements

- P: Go in Peace and Serve the Lord!
c: **Thanks be to God!**



WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

For all who worship this day, bless us through your Word, O Lord. Pastor Bill Wurm (Alzheimer's disease); Tom Janes (healing & strength); Myles King (blood disorder); Cindy Riemer (cancer); Michael Helzer (cancer); Michael Parker (healing & strength); Jim & Kari (healing and strength); Greg Voss (healing & strength); Curt Bayer (cancer) former member of Grace; Sindy Schmidt (healing); Sandra Mallas (health, peace, comfort); Gary Forsythe (dementia); Dominic (recovery from a stroke); Brittany (cancer); Greg (cancer); Judy (poor eyesight); Darlene & Jerry Urbaniak's Nephew (Alzheimer's); Linda (brain cancer); Bryan (cancer); Jenny Rice (cancer); Dale (cancer); Cookie (lung cancer); Evan (healing & strength); Sue Klemme (pancreatic cancer); Keith Iverson (hospice); Scott (kidney failure); Jennifer (diagnosed with MS); Rachel Goodle (prayers for God's strength); Brooke Bzdawka (blood clot); Daniel Abelt (cancer); and Alyssa (healing & strength); Michael Abelt (healing & strength); Stephanie (pregnant with twins); Katie Bailey Klinge (cancer); Andora (surgery for cancer); Sabrina (cancer); Lori Jablonski (cancer) and Jessie Marshall (healing & strength) friend of Cathy Weeks; Paige (God's help & comfort), Emilee; and Isaac (healing from a broken ankle), Heather (cancer), Steve Benzie (stomach pain, hernia); Craig (stem cell transplant); Dianna Abelt (healing and strength); Sara Keno (seizures); Dale Schmidt (Huntington's Disease); and Mike Zanardi (pancreatic cancer); Doc Medek (rehabilitation); Sharon McCaigue (cancer); and Cheryl (cancer) friend of Sharon Iseli; Daniel Sinnen (cancer) Grandson of Bernice Byklum; Carol Long (cancer) friend of Joy Lussier; and Blaine Goldner (kidney transplant), friend of Carol Loveall.

For our Homebound Members at Grace: Betty Lemmer (hospice), Kathy Gaudian, Bernice Byklum, Art Steinborn, Patricia Groth, and Gloria Kilponen.

We Mourn with the family and friends of **Scott Dimke**, friend of Lisa & Eric Kamprath, who was recently called home to heavenly rest. **We pray:** *Almighty God, Father of mercies and God of all comfort, deal graciously with the families of Scott Dimke, and all who mourn his death, that casting every care on You, they may know the consolation of Your love. Through Jesus Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.*

All those on the Grace Prayer Line dealing with long term health and medical issues; Hear our prayer. We encourage you to submit prayer requests for worship and/or our prayer line by emailing: Paulinemom@aol.com.

If you do not have access to a computer you may call:

Prayers for worship:

Church Office:

414-762-8990

Requests on prayer line: 10am-3 pm

Carol Thurber

414-762-9615

3pm-9 pm

Pauline Parker

414-764-5574

Assisting with the Divine Service

We thank God for all those individuals who have been involved in supporting our worship services this week. If you are interested in assisting in any of the ways shown below, please speak with pastor or one of our elders.

| | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| | <u>Thursday 12/21 6:30pm</u> | <u>Sunday 12/24 9:30am</u> | |
| <u>Elders</u> | Lance Kopperud | Adam Voss | |
| <u>Readers</u> | Kathryn Szefflinski | Erika Vitek | |
| <u>Communion Set-up</u> | Advent | Kathy Szefflinski | |
| <u>Linens</u> | Gail Nowakowski | Gail Nowakowski | |
| <u>Acolyte</u> | Elder | Martin Taggatz | |
| <u>Ushers</u> | Doug Klipfel | Tommy Szefflinski | |
| | Charlotte Klipfel | Andrea Szefflinski | |
| | | Edward Taggatz | |
| | <u>Sunday 12/24 4:00pm</u> | <u>Sunday 12/24 5:30pm</u> | <u>Monday 12/25 9:30am</u> |
| <u>Elders</u> | Greg Nowakowski | Eric Kamprath | Mike Huber |
| <u>Readers</u> | Pastor Taggatz | Pastor Taggatz | Pastor Taggatz |
| <u>Communion Set-up</u> | | | |
| <u>Linens</u> | Gail Nowakowski | Gail Nowakowski | Gail Nowakowski |
| <u>Acolyte</u> | Elder | Elder | Martin Taggatz |
| <u>Ushers</u> | | Eric Kamprath | |
| | | Lisa Kamprath | |

Volunteers Needed to Assist with Worship!

We are in need of additional people to assist as ushers and lay readers during worship services, especially for Sunday mornings at 8am and Thursday evenings at 6:30pm. Ushers arrive early, greet people and hand out bulletins before service, gather offerings and assist with communion during service, and straighten up the church after service. Lay readers proclaim God's word to the congregation by reading the Old Testament and Epistle lessons during the worship service. If you are able and willing to help in either of these capacities, please sign up on the sheet in the back of church -- your assistance is greatly appreciated. Please feel free to approach the elder on duty with any questions you may have about these opportunities.

Your 2024 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 2024.****

Choir at Grace

Choir practice is on Thursday evenings in the church following worship. Please consider joining our church choir. Music has a unique way of connecting us with God, and being a part of the choir is a beautiful opportunity to share your voice and your faith. Whether you're an experienced singer or someone who simply loves to sing, we welcome you with open arms. Martin Luther once said, "*He who sings, prays twice.*" Please contact Kathy Kolb, our Choir Director, for further details if you are interested in joining our church's choir.

Welcome to our New Members at Grace!!!

We welcome these new families to Grace as of this past month.

We are so happy that you have joined our Church family!!! *Mary & Tammy Rowley, Jared & Erika Zeimentz and family, & Rebekah Lofton and family!*

Sign-up for 2024 Altar Flowers! The sign-up sheet is posted on the white board in the narthex.

Place your flower order directly with Parkway Floral in South Milwaukee at: (414) 762-0246. Flowers will be delivered to church, free of charge, before the Thursday evening service. You can also supply your own arrangement. Rachel Miliacca at the ECC can provide you with a vase liner. Your flowers will be refrigerated after the Thursday service so they will be fresh for Sunday's services. Take your flowers to enjoy at home after the 10:30am service on Sunday.

Reminder: If you want to put flowers on the altar, you must pay for it directly to the florist (Parkway Floral, South Milwaukee) if using a florist. Also, there are special offering envelopes in the narthex for Altar Flowers that you can use to make payment.

Mitten Tree "*O Mitten tree, O Mitten tree Your branches are so bare and cold! O Mitten tree, O mitten tree*

Your branches are so bare and cold. We will fill you with hats and mittens! Wrap you with warmth and love.

O mitten tree, O mitten tree Your branches are so bare and cold." Thank you! -Ladies Guild. Once again this year, the Mitten Tree has been placed in the narthex. Guild will be collecting mittens, hats, scarves and gloves which will be donated to the South Milwaukee Human Concerns group. Please help us to "*decorate*" the tree! All sizes are needed! If you are a knitter or crocheter...Pauline Parker has bins of yarn to be used for this project...please reach out to her if you need some

Altar Guild -We at Grace are blessed with not just one faithful and selfless individual who tends to the altar, we have a whole team of such folks! And we are looking for more to join the team! Altar Guild duties are divided into Communion Set-up and Linen Care. Our schedules are flexible so we can accommodate your schedule. Questions about serving? Contact: Jennifer Olen 414.305.3740 olenjennifer@aol.com OR ask one of the altar ladies as you see her working in the altar room!

SAVE THE DATE - January 20th - **Bingo Night at Grace** - Our Fellowship Committee at Grace would like to announce our next event on Saturday, Jan 20th at 6:30-8:00. It was such a hit last year and we were asked to bring it back. It will be a free night of fellowship, fun, food and small prizes. We will be asking you to bring finger foods to pass and non alcoholic drinks for your family. (we are not allowed to have alcoholic drinks on the school premises.) This is a family event for all Church, School, and ECC families. We will have activities for grade school children, kindergarten and up, to keep them entertained. We will NOT be able to accommodate younger children. We are also looking for students that need service hours to help entertain these young ones, or if some adults would be interested that would be fine. Please mark your calendars and be sure to sign-up! We would love to see all of you there! We will put out the particulars and sign-up sheets in the Narthex. There was also an email send to all church members with a link to sign up as well.



Holiday Worship Schedule for 2023

“Jesus: The Son of David, the Son of Abraham”

Sunday December 24th 9:30am 4th Sunday in Advent, with communion

Sunday Dec. 24th 4pm & 5:30pm—Christmas Eve, no communion: “Jesus: The Son of Mary” (Matthew 1:16)

Monday Dec. 25th 9:30am—Christmas Day, with communion: “Christmas, as John Writes It” (John 1:1–14)

No Thursday evening worship on Thursday December 28th

Sunday December 31st 9:30am New Year’s Eve Worship, with communion— Guest Pastor Jim Klug

Thursday evening worship resumes on Thursday January 4th, 6:30pm, with communion

Sunday January 7th 8am & 10:30am Services, with communion— “People Who Don’t Belong” (Matthew 2:1–12)

Stephen Ministry Training at Grace—Are you interested in becoming a Stephen Minister? Stephen Ministers are lay congregation members trained to provide one-to-one care to those experiencing a difficult time in life, such as grief, divorce, job loss, chronic or terminal illness, or relocation. Stephen Ministers come from all walks of life, but they all share a passion for bringing Christ’s love and care to people during a time of need. Trainees learn how to listen to, care for, and walk with those going through difficult times in life. After being matched with a person experiencing a life crisis, the Stephen Minister meets with that person on a weekly basis to listen, care, encourage, and provide emotional and spiritual support. The caring relationship lasts as long as the need for care exists. We are going to begin a new training session for Stephen Ministers in February of 2024. The training is scheduled to take place on Sunday evenings from 6-8:30pm starting February 11th and ending June 23rd. (We will take off for Easter Monday and Memorial Day). If you would like to learn more about Stephen Ministry, you can contact Jeanne Meyer at: meyorch@sbcglobal.net or 414-423-0010. Look for a special informational meeting between our Sunday morning worship services in December where you will have more information to learn about training to become a Stephen Minister at Grace! To learn more about Stephen Ministry you can also go to this website: www.stephenministries.org/stephenministry/default.cfm/917

Church & School Furnaces Needed

We are currently in need of funding for our aged furnaces at both the school and church. This fundraiser is to replace the 7 remaining furnaces at our school and the boiler at our church. All units are over 20 years old. The goal is \$50,000. Please prayerfully consider donating above and beyond your general offerings. There will be offering envelopes in the narthex and a donation box for your offerings. Thank you for your ongoing support of our ministries at Grace! God bless you! **Currently we have raised over \$30,331.63 for the church & school furnace fund, thank you for your support!**

Adult Bible Class Topic (*note: we will take a break from Bible Class December 24th and December 31st, we will resume Bible Class on Sunday January 7th, 2024*)— **God's Word for Today: 1 & 2 Thessalonians—*The Lord is Faithful***. On Sunday mornings in the school building, we will be studying 1 & 2 Thessalonians from 9:15-10:15am. In this bible study you will learn that God gave Paul a vision. In it, a man from Macedonia pleaded with Paul saying, "*Come over to Macedonia and help us*" (Acts 16:9). Following the Lord's call, Paul and his entourage eventually reached Thessalonica. In his two letters addressed to the Thessalonian Christians, Paul expresses his deep care as a founding pastor concerned about his fledgling congregation. In addition to Christian persecution, the Lord's second coming, the antichrist, and Christian discipline, in this bible study you will learn about:

1. the power of the word of God;
2. the importance of living a God-pleasing life;
3. the reason why we are faithful to the bible's teachings.

IN THE WORD FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Catechism: Creed—The Second Article of the Creed and Explanation

Verse of the week: Titus 3:4-5a, "*When the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.*"

Psalm of the week: Psalm 96

Hymn of the week: LSB 359 "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" (stanzas 1-2)

Bible Readings for the Week:

Sunday— Mary Visits Elizabeth—Luke 1:39-56

Monday— The Word Became Flesh—John 1:1-18

Tuesday— St. Stephen, Martyr: Acts 6:8—7:60

Wednesday— St. John, Apostle and Evangelist: John 21:20-25

Thursday— Holy Innocents, Martyrs: Matthew 2:13-18

Friday— The Rest in Returning to the Lord—Isaiah 30:8-17

Saturday— The Spirit of the Lord Shall Rest Upon Him—Isaiah 11:1-5

LUTHERAN HOUR DEVOTIONS ADVENT 2023

“What Child Is This?”

In Jesus' birth, God came down to earth for us. In *What Child Is This?* we see how Jesus, foretold by the prophets and confirmed by God as His own Beloved Son, is the Father's ancient promise fulfilled. Born to save us from our sins, this lowly Child triumphed over sin and death to become our Savior. Lutheran Hour devotionals are available on the back table of the narthex in our Church. We will include our church's contact information, along with our Holiday Worship Times so that you can share the joy of the birth of our Savior Jesus with those around you, namely, your neighbors, family members, and friends. Here are some tips on sharing these devotions with your neighbors, family members, and friends inviting them to worship with us this holiday season:

SEEK GOD:

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to work in the heart of your friend.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to bless all interactions with your friends and family.

BE CREATIVE:

- Exchange stories of family Christmas traditions. You'll learn about others' current spiritual situation and be able to share what Jesus means to you.
- Invite your friends to make new traditions this year, especially if the Christmas season is stressful or depressing. Invite them to read the devotions with you, go to Advent services, or participate in a servant event.
- Bring your friend or family member to help work at a church activity before Christmas. Getting to know people in a nonthreatening way makes them more likely to attend future worship.

FOLLOW UP:

Devotions from Lutheran Hour Ministries can help keep your faith conversations going. Read, listen, e-mail, or print at lhm.org/advent.

“This time of the year always fills us with cheer | But the reason we celebrate is not always clear | The cookies, the lights, the presents, the tree | The carols, the decorations, the family parties | But all of the delight and all of the fun | Does not mean a thing if we don't know God's Son | The tiny baby that was born to die | Can sometimes cause us to stop and ask why | Do we really deserve the sacrifice He made? | Are we worth the offering and the price that was paid? | In His eyes, we are, because He made us His own | And on the cross, the ultimate love was shown | So take joy in the season and spread His true love | But always remember the gift from above!” *Jerrold Nelson – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org* Hurting from abortion? Word of Hope can help. www.word-of-hope.org; 888-217-8679.

LUTHERAN HOUR "Community and Conversation" Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler. This Christmas Eve, God wants to be found in the human community gathered in the name of Jesus and in the

conversation connected with Him. (John 1:1) **The Lutheran Hour can be heard any time on the internet at: lhm.org** scroll down the page and click on, “listen now.” Or listen to any of these local radio stations on Sunday mornings.

| | | | |
|------|----------|---------------|------------------------|
| WTMJ | 103.3 FM | Milwaukee, WI | Sun 6:30 am |
| WTMJ | 620 AM | Milwaukee, WI | Sun 5:30 and & 6:30 am |

LOCK IN FOR GRACE YOUTH—We are planning a lock-in at Grace Lutheran School on Friday, January 5th, starting at 6:30pm and concluding on Saturday, January 6th around 6:30am. This lock in is open to our 5th grade through High School youth. For this event to be a success, we need your participation and support. Parents or adult members willing to chaperone and assist during the lock-in, please reach out to Pastor Taggatz at: pastor@graceoakcreek.org. Your involvement will greatly contribute to creating a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone. During the lock-in, we have an array of activities lined up, including devotions centered on God's Word, snacks, a Friday night dinner, and engaging games. To ensure we accommodate everyone, kindly inform us if your child will be attending by no later than Tuesday January 2nd. Also, please have your child bring snacks, a pillow, a sleeping bag, a Bible, and a comfortable sleeping mat for the night.

Stewardship Minute— In the Christmas story, we are told that the Magi followed the brilliant star in the sky to find Jesus. These noblemen were seeking the “*King of the Jews*” (Matthew 2:2). The star led them to Bethlehem and “*going into the house, they saw the child with His Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh*” (Matthew 2:11). When the Magi entered the house and saw the baby Jesus, they immediately “*bowed down and worshiped Him.*” Before they gave their gifts, they first showed their reverence. In essence, they gave themselves. Their hearts were filled with joy to be in the presence of the King. After they had shown Jesus their adoration, they gave their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

LET US ADORE OUR SAVIOR LIKE THE SHEPHERDS DID – WITH OUR PRESENCE – AND LIKE THE MAGI DID – WITH OUR GIFTS.

“Praise our God, all you His servants, you who fear Him, both small and great!” (Revelation 19:5)



Growing in Grace

December 14th & 17th

Offering

| | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|----|
| <i>General Offering</i> | \$4613.25 | | |
| <i>On-Line Giving</i> | \$902.32 | | |
| <i>Missions</i> | \$0.00 | <i>Attendance – Thurs. Service</i> | 32 |
| <i>Debt Fund</i> | \$0.00 | <i>Sunday Service</i> | 92 |
| <i>Mortgage Offering</i> | \$20.00 | <i>Total Communed</i> | 74 |
| <i>Portals of Prayer</i> | \$0.00 | | |
| <i>Total</i> | \$5535.57 | | |

Please note: In order to meet budget each week we need to receive \$6,586 in offerings. Thank you for your generosity and support of the ministries here at Grace. We could not do what we do without your prayers, volunteering of your time and talents, and financial support!!!

OPPORTUNITIES AT GRACE THIS COMING WEEK

| | | | |
|-----------|-------|--|--|
| Sunday | 12/24 | 9:30 am 4:00 pm 5:30 pm | Divine Worship with Communion Christmas Eve Service Christmas Eve Service |
| Monday | 12/25 | 9:30 am | Christmas Day Service |
| Tuesday | 12/26 | 7:00 am | Men’s Bible Study and Breakfast (OC Diner) |
| Wednesday | 12/27 | ----- | ----- |
| Thursday | 12/28 | ----- | ***No Divine Worship*** |
| Friday | 12/29 | ----- | ----- |
| Saturday | 12/30 | ----- | ----- |
| Sunday | 12/31 | 9:30 am | New Year’s Eve Worship with Pastor Jim Klug |

SPECIAL WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS

We have gathered today to celebrate the most precious gifts and treasures our Lord gives us: His forgiveness, life and salvation. It would be our honor to have you join us again next week as we “Celebrate, Teach, and Share” the Good News of God’s Grace among all people.

Grace is committed to supporting families through our Early Childhood Center, Day School, and High School. We are blessed to be a member of the Lutheran High School Association of Milwaukee.

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| Pastor | Rev. John M. Taggatz | 414-762-8990 (O) 715-467-1231 (Cell) 262-664-4365 (Home) thewordendures.blogspot.com |
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|------------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| Principal | Mr. Steve Gettelman | 414-762-3655 |
| ECC Director | Mrs. Rachel Miliacca | 414-762-8755 |
| Director of Music | Mrs. Lisa Hengst | |
| Choir Director | Mrs. Kathy Kolb | |
| Congregation President | Mr. Tony Mirenda | 414-807-7445 |

| | | |
|------|---------------|--------------|
| Fax: | Church/School | 414-762-8869 |
| | ECC | 414-856-9262 |

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|---------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Pastor | | pastor@graceoakcreek.org |
| Church Office | Heidi Brunzelle, Church Secretary | church@graceoakcreek.org |
| Principal | | principal@graceoakcreek.org |
| School Office | Dena Guziewicz, Admin. Asst. | school@graceoakcreek.org |
| ECC Director | | eccdirector@graceoakcreek.org |
| ECC Office | | ecc@graceoakcreek.org |

Church & ECC
3381 E. Puetz Rd.
Oak Creek, Wisconsin 53154

School & Church Office
Mailing Address
8537 S. Pennsylvania Ave.
Oak Creek, Wisconsin 53154

