



**GRACE  
LUTHERAN CHURCH**

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# Grace for Today

JANUARY, 2019 • VOLUME 18, NO. 1

## **CHRISTMAS HAS COME!!!!.....By Pastor Ken Gibson**

For a short time now we have been singing, praying, and desiring that Christmas would come. We have sung O' Come O' Come Emanuel. We have spoken words of longing for the light that overcomes all darkness to come again so that we might celebrate the birth of the "Savior tis Christ the Lord." (Luke2:11) Now we are in Christmas, we have celebrated again the greatest birth of all time. A birth that was heralded by angels to shepherds who kept watch o'er their flocks by night. Yes, Christmas has come! It had taken a serious long time for the first advent to be brought to conclusion. How long had the people waited for this One to come and how might the reality of this amazing advent event effect the world as it was known? We only have four short weeks of Advent in our calendar, yet I wonder if we could use more? In a sermon given by Luther on Christmas day in 1530 Luther began his lengthy message, (if you think my sermons are long sometimes, read some of Dr. Martins) with the following opening words;

*"You have heard today the story from the Gospel of St. Luke of how it came to pass that our Lord Christ was born and then also the message of the angel, who announced who the boy was who was born. Now we shall go on and take up the message of the angel. So, for today you have heard only that the child was born and that this is the Lord and Savior. Thus, we spoke of the story, how it unfolded, and who the persons in it were."*

Luther then goes on to discuss in many pages what our role is to be next. Just like then, I think this is still the message that we should consider as well. In short, we know the story. We know the persons that make the story possible. Yet, do we take the next step? For the next step is one of faith. It is up to us to believe and to be so moved by this event that we are compelled to live out our lives sharing in the truth of who this one is. Think of all the Christmas cards and crafted images we have that simply say on them "Believe". This story in all its simplicity is indeed the greatest story ever told. Not even a Hallmark Movie can exceed its glory.

So, I wonder, did you catch a hint in the opening remarks that Luther sees us to be about the work of taking up the work of the angel? He states in his second sentence; "Now we shall go on and take up the message of the angel." We are to be the proclaimers of this good news. We are to be the angels of our time. Now you might be thinking; "I really don't see myself as very angelic." But in truth we are to be about such work. And being a little more angelic, currently, is without a doubt, something the whole world could and should embrace. So, as we sing again the great Hymns we long to sing, let us hear these words and live out our Christmas identity. For we have heard, and we do sing of; Angels We Have Heard on High, ELW 289 and of That Boy-Child of Mary ELW 293 and of The First Noel ELW 300. But let us not forget hymn #290 ELW; and let it be our "angel work' here and now. GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN. Over the hills and everywhere. Sing if you like, its ok, it is our role and yes, we do sing with "Angelic" voices one and all!

Now please let me conclude with a big THANK YOU to so many of you who have sent a card or offered a gift to me and Yvonne over this season. Your love reflects the angel lights and voices you truly are.

MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE! Keep up the ANGEL work!!!!



**SUNDAY SCHOOL PRESENTATION-** The preschool through 4th grade Sunday School students have a special treat prepared for you. Together with their teachers and Mr. Jon, they have been working hard to sing and sign a musical selection for all. The students will share their talent at the 10:45 service on **January 27th**. Please join us.

**SENIOR LUNCHEON- January 22** - Have you thought about setting aside funds to pay for your final expenses? Or, perhaps you're preparing to enter a nursing home and need to know how to protect your assets in order to qualify for Medicaid? Life's most memorable milestones require planning. End of life expenses are no different. Learn about Funeral Trusts this month and how they can be of help to you and your family. Our cozy, warm menu begins with an assortment of cheese and crackers followed by a hearty beef stew with double cheddar biscuits and Oreo cookie cake for dessert. Cost is only \$5, so bring a friend! Sign up in the Activity Binder by **January 20** Questions, call Shirley Busse at 815-338-9063

**CONGREGATIONAL RESOURCING EVENT-** Mark your calendars for the Congregational Resourcing Event (CRE) **March 9, 2019** at Kishwaukee Community College, Malta, Illinois. Our keynote speaker will be the Rev. Dr. Dave Daubert. This event is an opportunity for leaders and members of congregations across the Northern Illinois Synod to learn and share resources. Save the date and look for further details about registration and carpooling from Grace and visit <http://nisynod.org/cre/> to learn more.

**BULLETIN & PRESENCE LIGHT SPONSORS-** 2019 Bulletin & Presence Light sponsor sheets are available in the green binder at the Welcome 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 us fund the weekly bulletins and presence lights.

**EPIPHANY HOME BLESSING-** January 6 in the church calendar year is the Epiphany of our Lord, the celebration of the revelation of Christ to all nations. Stop by the Information Desk in the narthex to pick up a piece of chalk and short prayer service to participate in the tradition of an Epiphany Home Blessing. May Christ bless each home in this new year!

**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 Elizabeth Eaton, churchwide staff & their families, Bishop Jeff Clements, synod staff & their families, those serving in military conflicts, Arusha Town Lutheran Parish in Tanzania (our companion parish), Scott Bunch serving in the military.

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

**Health Concerns:** Rev. Jim Berg (friend of Marlene Botts), Lois Bloese, John Bloese, Angela Boe (friend of Hanlin Family), Mary Sue Boerner (friend of Paul Lockwood & Diane Baker-Lockwood), Sheila Boggess (friend of Kathy Stone), Frank Bunch, Allison Clark (niece of Martha & Bill Fleck), Dot Clark (mother of Martha Fleck), Jim Davis, Nancy Davis, Patrice Dunn, Zebadiah Fenneman, Robert Giron (brother of Patty Kozlow), Tom Goggin, Becca Guenther (niece of Gretchen & Claude Hutchens), Tamasa Gutierrez (mother of Patty Kozlow), Sue Hanson-Smith (friend of Barb Aavang), Liz Henniges (wife of Al Henniges), Baby Jaxson L. (friend of the Wedoff family), Nancy Knieja (friend of Martha Fleck), Elayna Kuipers (friend of the Wedoff Family), Anna Larsen (sister of Al Henniges), John Mahoney, Wilma Malinasky (mother of Janice Laird), Amanda McNally (grandniece of Diane Baker-Lockwood), Renee Merklin (friend of Rachel Bratanick), Karen Millman, Tammy Millman (daughter of Karen Millman), Kem Moran (friend of Barb Aavang), Carl Neubaum (son of Donna Neubaum), JoyAnn Oberman, Kayla Oberman, Riley Obenchain, Carol O'Brien (sister of Bill Larsen), Gloria Ogle, Arne Olson, Andrea Paetsch (aunt of Debbi Lynd), Clark Phillips (father of Cindy Meyer), Vicki Pilgard, John Potoczky, Carol Rank, Shawn Rank (son of Carol Rank), Sheila Readel, Therese Rebman (mother of Mary Koehn), Herb & Bev Renner (brother & sister in law of Ken & Gladys Renner), Jessie & Sue Robertson (friends of Ron, Mary & Kimberly Koehn), Joan Russell (mother of Sheri Conover), Colton Sciluffo (infant son of a friend of Joy Oberman), Bill Seger, Eleanor Setser, Linda Sprenkle (friend of Ron & Mary Koehn), Orion Stine (friend's grandson of Kathy Stone), Elsie Stoddard, Ginny Stroh (mother of Fay Wilson), Doris Sunday, Samuel Sweeney (nephew of Melissa McMahan), Ellie Mae Thompson (great niece of Gladys & Ken Renner), Josh Tillman, Brian Tobin (grandson of Enn Teetsov), Bev Visconti, Bud Winter, Ruth Zirves

**Sorrows:** Ryan Fleming (son of Steve & Georgia Fleming)

**Joys:** Baptism of Cole Alexander Daggett (son of Gage & Bailey Daggett)

If you wish to add a prayer request for the 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.

## ENDINGS AND BEGINNINGS .....by Pastor Amanda

I finally had a chance to watch the latest documentary on Mister Rogers and am struck by the legacy formed by his simple, straightforward, honest, and compassionate communication. I have long appreciated Mister Rogers and his neighborhood, apparently as a child I once ran up to the TV in tears to say goodbye. And since my two sisters share the same birthdate 5 years apart, I felt special knowing that I shared the same birthdate with Mister Rogers. Now, I occasionally hear similar themes and lessons when my own kids watch the new Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood.

In these days of eager anticipation for celebrating Jesus' birth at Christmas and then the quick turn towards the start of the New Year, here are a few words from Mr. Rogers (from *The World According to Mister Rogers: Important Things*).

"Often when you think you're at the end of something, you're at the beginning of something else. I've felt that many times. My hope for all of us is that "the miles we go before we sleep" will be filled with all the feelings that come from deep caring - delight, sadness, joy, wisdom - and that in all the endings of our life, we will be able to see the new beginnings." -Mister Rogers

I wish you God's peace that surpasses understanding, courage for all the feelings, comfort in grieving, delight in rejoicing, and the ability to see new beginnings. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



**LIVING LUTHERAN MAGAZINE-** Do you know about Living Lutheran? Living Lutheran is a source for news, reflections and stories from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and its local and global companions. They cover religious news and social issues, congregational life, global and domestic mission, family matters, spiritual practices and resources, and more. As the magazine of the ELCA, their mission is to: Nurture awareness of Christ's presence in our lives and the world-Share stories of God's people living their faith- Connect readers with the global Christian community- Provide an open forum for discussion- Challenge readers to bring God's grace and care to all. Visit <https://www.livinglutheran.org/subscribe/> to sign up for Living Lutheran e-digest to receive stories delivered to your inbox weekly, biweekly or monthly; or to subscribe (\$19.95) to the print edition of the magazine and receive 12 issues delivered directly to your home.

**PRESCHOOL NEWS-** As we say good bye to Miss Terri at the end of 2018, Mrs. Chris will be stepping in as the Preschool Interim Director. Effective immediately, applicants are being accepted to fill the Director Position. Please contact the church office or preschool office for the job description and qualifications. Information is also posted on indeed.com When applying please submit a resume, transcripts and any additional qualifications.

**MISTLETOE MARKETPLACE-** We are very excited to announce Mistletoe Magic will return in 2019 as Mistletoe Marketplace! What can you do to help? We are accepting donations of the following- (think after Christmas shopping): New wrapping paper ~ New gift bags ~ Christmas towels ~ Christmas mugs ~ Ribbon rolls ~ Wired ribbon ~ New gift baskets or Holiday boxes ~ Cookie cutters ~ Holiday tins ~ Holiday paper goods (cupcake liners, napkins, plates, cookie boxes) ~ Nativity scenes ~ Faux wreaths ~ Christmas lights ~ Christmas trees ~ Garland ~ Holiday animal toys ~ Yarn ~ Yards of fabric ~ Clear glass or plastic ornaments. A donation drop box is available near the coats in the Narthex.

We would love to hear your ideas! If you have an idea or a special God given talent in creating, we would love to hear from you. We will be asking for volunteers and donations throughout the year. Please email us at [mistletoemarketplace@gmail.com](mailto:mistletoemarketplace@gmail.com), we would love to hear from you!

We are very excited and feel extremely blessed to have this opportunity to serve. We are looking forward to working with you to help serve our community!

Look for one of us in the Narthex following Sunday services so you can sign up for volunteer opportunities. Thank you in advance for your help with this ministry.

Jen Robbins & Alyssa Crown, [gracemistletoemarketplace@gmail.com](mailto:gracemistletoemarketplace@gmail.com)

**SUNDAY BOOK CLUB-** January 6, 2019 in room 102 between services. We begin our new selection: "unPHILtered, the way I see it" by Phil Robertson of Duck Dynasty. In this book, Phil candidly reveals his views on faith, family, forgiveness, social media and even the hot button topics of gun control, politics, race, entitlements and everything in between. As we study one topic at a time you will explore your views, Phil's views and what the Bible says. Come, relax and enjoy some homemade treats and some lively discussions

**MONTHLY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE-**The deadline for the February newsletter is **January 15**. Send articles to Tammy Baier at [tbaier@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:tbaier@gracewoodstock.org), or the church office. Questions: Call the office at 815-338-0554.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS- ,  
classes will resume January  
6th.

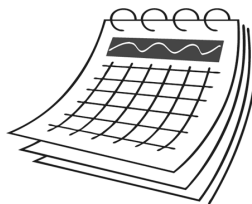


### CHURCH CLOSINGS AND EVENT CANCELLATIONS -

When severe weather arrives, Grace Lutheran Church will follow D200 closing and cancellations. All weekday activities, including preschool, will be cancelled if D200 has cancelled classes. Please check the [Emergency Closing Center website](#) or any of the radio stations listed on the [D200 website](#) for any severe weather cancellations.

### SAVE THE DATE-

New Years' Day- Church Office Closed  
Youth Group Chicago Trip- JAN 2  
No PrimeTime- JAN 2  
Sunday School Resumes- JAN 6  
PrimeTime Back- JAN 9  
Men's/Afternoon Bible Study-JAN 15  
Adoration- JAN 18  
MLK Day/Church Closed- JAN 21  
Faith Circle- JAN 21  
Senior Lunch- JAN 22  
New Praise Singers- JAN 22  
Men's/Afternoon Bible Study-JAN 22  
Adoration- JAN 25  
Men's/Afternoon Bible Study-JAN 29  
Men's/Afternoon Bible Study-FEB 5  
Men's/Afternoon Bible Study-FEB 12  
Pres.Day/Church Office Closed-FEB 18  
Transfiguration Weekend- MAR 2/3



Visit the Grace website for the most up-to-date  
information for all that is happening at Grace!  
[gracewoodstock.org](http://gracewoodstock.org)

#### GRACE STAFF & COUNCIL

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