

Weekly Announcements

December 3, 2017

Today at Grace

In our prayers this morning we remember Valparaiso University.

Education hour at 9:45 a.m.

Sunday School students (grade 1–4) meet in the third-floor school commons for opening worship. **Preschool and kindergarten students** meet in the JK classroom on the lower level. **Pre-Confirmation and Confirmation** students meet in their classrooms. **Teen Talk** meets in the Youth Room for conversation on faith and life.

Putting Christ Back Into Christmas, with Ellie Schnack and Evie Tiemann

In the rush and stress of our society's celebration of a commercial holiday season, how can we remind our families and ourselves that Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ? *In the Seminar Room.*

The Sunday morning Bible study group meets in the lower-level conference room.

Advent mid-week worship on Wednesdays December 6, 13 and 20

Morning Prayer at 11:30 a.m.

Lunch will be served on December 13.

Evening Prayer at 7 p.m.

Supper will be served in the gym at 6 p.m.

Annual Grace Christmas concert is next Sunday, 4 p.m.

Join the Grace Senior Choir, the Grace School 5–8 Choir, Joyful Voices, and the Adult Handbell Ensemble for the annual Advent/Christmas concert, "Out of Darkness We Have Light," next Sunday, December 10, at 4 p.m.

The program includes Bach's cantata "*Mein Seel erhebt den Herren*" (BWV 10) based on the text of the Magnificat, and Ralph Vaughan Williams' "*Fantasia on Christmas Carols*" featuring baritone soloist Douglas Anderson.

There will be a free-will offering. Childcare is available in the church nursery during the concert. A reception hosted by Women @ Grace follows the concert in Grace's gym.

Advent Thankoffering

Make a special gift to Grace Church in December, in thanks for God's abundant gifts to you.

What excites you about ministry at Grace Church? What feeds you? Where do you see God at work in your life? And how will you respond?

As the end of 2017 approaches, please consider giving a special Advent Thankoffering gift to Grace. Your gifts empower our ministry here at Grace Church and School and help to make Jesus known in our community and beyond.

You may give online, or place a check in the offering plate. Advent Thankoffering envelopes are available in the narthex. Please write "Thankoffering" on the memo line of your check.

I was raised to understand that financial giving to support the ministry of the church is necessary for the church to survive. But giving to Grace is no duty or responsibility for me. It is a joy! Grace is family and community and care. I am more than willing to give what I can in response to the great outpouring of love I find here.

Grace member Julie Hinz

Financial update — Grace Lutheran Church General Fund

Church budgeted contributions, July–November 2017	\$ 835,000 (\$38,000 per week)
Church actual contributions, July–November, 2017	\$ 607,000

Church giving is currently \$232,000 below budget and \$52,000 below last year

Grace News

Sing-Along Messiah this afternoon

Join in singing (or just listen) at this afternoon's performance of Handel's Messiah, 4 p.m. in the sanctuary, sponsored by Credo Music. Grace member Douglas Anderson is among the soloists. Free admission, with donations to benefit Harmony Church's Food Pantry. Bring your own score, or rent one for \$5.

Reel Talk Christmas potluck

Please join us on Friday, December 8, at 6 p.m. in the church library for a potluck dinner and a movie. The film will be the 1951 edition of "A Christmas Carol" with Alastair Sim. A sign-up sheet is at the front desk or feel free to contact Margaret Garmatz at 702-769-1818 or mgarmatz@yahoo.com.

Call for cookies!

Women @ Grace need cookies galore for two upcoming events, both on Sunday, December 10: the Cookie Walk between services in the gym, and a reception following the Advent/Christmas Concert that afternoon. Share your baking talents! We'll be happy to accept cookies of all kinds, from Almond Butter Crunch Bites to Zucchini Delights and everything in between. Mark your calendar for a baking day, mix up a batch of your favorite recipe, then drop off your cookies between 9 a.m. and noon on Saturday, December 9, or on Sunday, December 10, before 9:30 am. Thanks! **Come to the Cookie Walk next Sunday from 9:45 to 11 a.m. in the gym.** For just \$10, you can fill a box with scrumptious home-baked cookies. Proceeds benefit a Women @ Grace benevolence.

Sponsor a poinsettia in the Christmas chancel

The Board of Worship is once again decorating the chancel with poinsettias for Christmas worship services. Sign-up at the reception desk by Sunday, December 17, to sponsor a plant in honor or in memory of someone; two-stem plants are \$15. You may take your poinsettia home after the Christmas Day worship service.

Scrip order deadline for Christmas gift-giving is Monday, December 11

Great Lakes Scrip Center offers gift cards from over 600 retailers, who donate a percentage of the price back to Grace School. Look for a list of participating retailers and order forms in the rack by the school office or at graceriverforest.org (Cclick on School > Parent Resources > Forms). Submit your Scrip order to the school office by Monday, Dec. 11, and cards will be available for pick-up before Christmas. Email Eileen Maggio (office@graceriverforest.org) for more information.

Sleeping bags for people who are homeless

The Social Ministry Committee is collecting new and like-new sleeping bags for the Sisters of Fraternité Notre Dame to distribute on Christmas Eve to the homeless people they serve. Please place sleeping bags in the bin in the atrium through December 17.

Sign up for the 2018 Slovakia Mission Trip

A Grace Church team will journey to Martin, Slovakia, next summer (June 28-July 7) to teach a week of Vacation Bible School at the Center for Christian Education (CCE). The team is forming at this time and new members are welcome. A brochure is available in the atrium or email Julie Modrich (jmodrich@graceriverforest.org) with questions.

Looking for a vehicle donation

Jeremiah Community Renewal Corporation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded by member Paul Eichwedel to provide transitional housing for returning citizens, is in need of a pick-up truck, van or other vehicle. A car would also be acceptable. If you are willing to donate a vehicle and/or need more information, please contact Paul at 872-233-5963 or via email at paulneichwedel@gmail.com.

Retired Leaders and others

The group meets on Tuesday, December 12, 10 a.m., in the Seminar Room, for a presentation from Carl Schalk on “The Music of Advent and Christmas.” Guests are welcome.

Sandwich-making at Fraternité

Grace members will be packing lunches at Fraternité Notre Dame, 502 N. Central, on Monday, December 18, at 7 p.m. Contact Kate Hogenson to arrange a ride.

Religion in Literature

The book discussion group meets on Friday, December 15, 8 p.m.. at the home of Jeff and Claudia Wood (1027 Thatcher Ave., River Forest) for a reading of Lowell Swortzell’s “The Shepherds of Saint Francis: The Story of the First Christmas Pageant in 1223.” Copies of the play are available at the reception desk.

Cornerstones fellowship and Bible study

Cornerstones meets on December 6 in the church library. Come for treats and conversation at 10 a.m., Bible study at 10:30, and Morning Prayer at 11:30.

Information for families about the Children’s Christmas Eve services

Go to GraceRiverForest.org > Resources > Children’s Christmas Eve Service for links to word sheets and audio files for children participating in the Christmas Eve services.

Questions? Contact Janel Dennen (jdennen@gracriverforest.org; 708-366-6900 ext. 247).

Family Fun Friday December 8, 6–8 pm

Crafts, open gym, and a pizza supper for families with children in kindergarten – 6th grade.

(Younger siblings welcome.) Register by midnight on Thursday, Dec. 7, at GraceRiverForest.org.



**DECEMBER 16
9AM–12PM**

Get a few hours to yourself during this busy holiday season — send your kids to Christmas Camp!

Click on Christmas Camp at GraceRiverForest.org to sign up. \$25 for the first child, \$15 for each additional sibling, or \$55 family.