

# December 2019 Grace Notes



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH • 7300 W DIVISION • RIVER FOREST IL 60305 • 708-366-6900 • WWW.GRACERIVERFOREST.ORG



*Preparing in  
Christ's presence*

**by Pastor Dave Lyle**

At the time of writing, it's not yet Thanksgiving. Advent is still more than a week away. Yet everywhere I look, people are getting ready for Christmas. A drive down Lake Street is all one needs to see signs of the season (a season we're not yet in!) popping up all over. Of course, the stores have had Christmas displays for weeks now. And best (or worst?) of all, my children have already begun requesting the Christmas music of Trans-Siberian Orchestra.

My mind wanders back eight years. Erika and I were waiting for our second child to be born. Anders, however, was in no hurry. The due date came and went. So

**The Christ for whom we wait is  
also the Christ who is already  
present with us.**

what did we do? We prepared for Christmas, even though it was only November. Assuming that we would have less spare time after his arrival, we made the most of our days before his birth. A tree was purchased. Ornaments were hung and lights were strung. Stockings were hung by the chimney with care – even as we wondered why our house on the Carolina coast needed a fireplace. While we worked, we played Christmas music.

I was skeptical. I've long believed that we should hold off on celebrating Christmas until Advent has, at least mostly, run its course. But there we were, and I loved it.

*Continued on page 2*

# Wait, hope, wonder, prepare. And celebrate.

*Continued from page 1*

We continued the slow movement of Advent, too, lighting candles, marking calendars, and refraining from singing Christmas hymns in worship at our church. Our preparation for Christmas was not only practical, it reminded us that the Christ for whom we wait is also the Christ who is already present with us. We celebrated Advent and Christmas simultaneously.

This just may make sense. After all, our annual journey toward Bethlehem is a reminder of the baby Jesus who was born two thousand years ago. And the Christ whom we await from God's future is also the Messiah and Savior who is already here, deeply present in Word and Sacrament, in song and prayer, in joy and longing.

I hope that you will be able to join us on Wednesdays in Advent for worship under the theme, "Preparing in Christ's Presence." As our Advent and Christmas eight years ago taught me, we don't wait for Christ to be present; we wait within his presence. We'll explore the ideas of doing less, experiencing wonder, and holding on to hope. These are such important things in today's

world that insists we do more, that overlooks the possibilities of joyful surprise, and that holds to fear and hate so hopelessly. I don't think we could do less, wonder more, and hold on to hope if we were on our own. But we're not. The Jesus we await is the same Jesus who waits with us.

So, whether or not you decorate as soon as possible for Christmas or hold on to Advent for as long as you can, my prayer for you this season is that you would have a sense of Christ's presence in your life – here, now, today. And waiting with him, that you can hope for something more.

And no matter how you mark the days of Advent, it won't be long until we gather in the dark to hear a child sing, "Once in royal David's city." It won't be long until we clutch candles that shine forth as we sing, "Silent Night." It won't be long until joy returns to the world. So wait. Hope. Wonder. Prepare. We celebrate the Christ who once was born, the Christ who will return, the Christ who is with us even now.

## **Preparing in Christ's Presence Advent mid-week worship Wednesdays, December 4, 11 and 18**

### **Morning Prayer, 11:30 a.m.**

Luncheon is served on December 4 and 11

Music by the Grace School orchestra on December 4

Music by the Grace School 5–8 choir on December 11

### **Evening Prayer, 7 p.m.**

Supper is served in Fellowship Hall at 6 p.m.

#### *December 4*

Supper prepared by GPO (Grace School Parent Organization)

Singing for worship: Grace School 5-8 choir

#### *December 11*

Supper prepared by the Health Cabinet

Singing for worship: Grace School 3-4 choir

#### *December 18*

Supper prepared by the Slovakia Mission Team

Singing for worship: Joyful Voices



**Grace Notes** is published monthly by Grace Lutheran Church and School, 7300 Division St., River Forest, Ill. It is mailed to Grace members, parents of students at Grace School, and friends of the congregation. The newsletter is online at [www.graceriverforest.org](http://www.graceriverforest.org). This issue was mailed via U.S. Postal Service Bulk Mail on Wednesday, November 27, with the hope that it will arrive in your mailbox no later than December 6. Copies are also available at Grace.

**Deadlines and submissions.** The January 2020 issue of *Grace Notes* will be mailed on Thursday, January 9. The deadline for copy is Thursday, January 2; the issue covers events through the first week of February. Send news to [ggotsch@graceriverforest.org](mailto:ggotsch@graceriverforest.org). Please limit submissions to news relating to Grace Lutheran Church and School, its mission, ministries, and the benevolences the congregation supports. Articles should be no longer than 500 words. Submissions may be edited for length, clarity, and relevance.



**Gloria in excelsis Deo!**  
Advent/Christmas Concert  
Sunday, December 15, 4 p.m.

## Choirs, trumpets, bells and harp sing and play the music of Christmas

Join the musicians of Grace Church and School as they proclaim the Christmas message in music and song at the annual Grace Advent/Christmas concert on Sunday, December 15, at 4 p.m. The program includes selections from Benjamin Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*, for harp and treble choir, sung by the young women of Joyful Voices. The Senior Choir sings John Rutter's magnificent *Gloria*, accompanied by orchestra and brass. You'll also hear performances by the adult handbell ensemble and the Grace School 5-8 Choir, plus Advent and Christmas hymns in settings by Paul Bouman, Carl Schalk, Richard Hillert, Robert Hobby, Hal Hopson, and Paul Manz.

A reception follows the concert in Fellowship Hall, with Christmas cookies and punch provided by Women @ Grace.

## God is with us on the longest night

There are times when our personal moods or circumstances do not align with the merriment we feel is expected of us at Christmas. Because of the burdens we bear, or the losses we've experienced, Christmas may not feel the same this year, or perhaps it hasn't felt that way for quite a while. There are also times when we're just tired of the noise and bustle and are seeking an opportunity to sit quietly and reflect on the meaning of God's gift to us at Christmas.

On December 21, at 7 p.m., the doors of our church open for the Longest Night worship service. All are welcome to come as they are to this quiet, contemplative space for prayer, songs, and much-needed silence. "It's our desire that people walk away from this service with a sense of God's comfort, feeling reminded of their life in Christ and the community, so they know they're not alone," commented Pastor Lauren Wegner, who will be leading the service. Whether you are experiencing grief, depression, navigating a painful transition, or just need some quiet time, come and be reminded of Emmanuel, God with us, who came into our darkness to be a great light. And as we make our way through what can feel like a challenging time of year, we can remember that Jesus Christ coming into the world truly makes a difference for us.



## Come for worship and brunch as we celebrate Epiphany on Sunday, January 5, at 10 a.m.

We all join in worship together when we gather for a service of Holy Communion at 10 a.m. on Sunday morning, January 5. We will celebrate the festival of Epiphany (though the actual date for that feast day is January 6.)

Brunch will be served in Fellowship Hall after the service. All are welcome!





# Preludes and postludes — what are they for?

by Irmgard Swanson and the Worship Committee

Every Sunday at Grace, worship services begin with a prelude and conclude with a postlude. Why are these musical pieces included in our worship? What are they for? Perhaps a good place to start would be with why we are in church in the first place.

If you were asked why you come to church, probably you would respond with something about the opportunity to worship God. Worshiping God is the reason we come together for a church service. It is an activity that will engage our whole being – thoughts, words, actions and emotions — though the stress of the previous or the upcoming week, the list of things to do after church, the big game later on in the day, etc., may compete for our focus and attention. We may need help in preparing to fully participate in the worship of our Triune God. The prelude can help us.

We could liken the prelude to the overture before a musical or an opera. When the music starts, people quiet down and listen, knowing that the overture prepares them for what is coming. In the same way the prelude before a worship service leads us into what is coming.

Just as we prepare for other things in our lives — following a routine to help us fall asleep, warming up muscles as we exercise, taking a few deep breaths before a big speech or important meeting — the prelude can prepare us to respond to the presence of God and to engage with the purpose of gathered worship. During the prelude, one can take the time to read the summary of the main theme for the day's worship on the bottom of the inside front cover of the bulletin, glance ahead at the scripture lessons for the day, look at the hymns, or simply meditate and pray. Whether the prelude is played by the organist or comes from a handbell ensemble, a choral group, or instrumentalists such as the Kontras Quartet, music has a unique power to quiet hearts and minds while glorifying God.

The postlude has a function similar to the prelude, except it moves in the opposite direction. It pulls together the ideas and feelings already expressed in word and song, embracing and confirming the spirit of the worship service and preparing us to be sent out into the world. Although there may be quiet conversation as people depart the sanctuary, an awareness of God's presence should be part of our departure. Some people prefer to stay in the sanctuary to listen to the postlude as a way to extend their worship experience. This preference should be honored.

So why do we have preludes and postludes? They are a part of worship, enabling us to be better prepared for coming into and for departing from the sacred space where the focus is always on our God and Lord.

## SUNDAY WORSHIP

Sunday, December 1, 8:30 and 11 a.m.

### FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 2:1-5, Psalm 122, Romans 13:11-14, Matthew 24:36-44

Sunday, December 8, 8:30 and 11 a.m.

### SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 11:1-10, Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19; Romans 15:4-13, Matthew 3:1-12

Sunday, December 15, 8:30 and 11 a.m.

### THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 35:1-10, Psalm 146:5-10, James 5:7-10, Matthew 11:2-11

Sunday, December 22, 8:30 and 11 a.m.

### FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 7:10-16, Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Romans 1:1-7, Matthew 1:18-25

Sunday, December 29, 8:30 and 11 a.m.

### FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

Isaiah 63:7-9, Psalm 148, Hebrews 2:10-18, Matthew 2:13-23

Sunday, January 5, 10 a.m.

### EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

#### ONE SERVICE of Holy Communion

Isaiah 60:1-6, Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14; Ephesians 3:1-12, Matthew 2:1-12

Brunch is served in Fellowship Hall after the service.

## Handbell Christmas Concert

The Grace School Bell Choir  
(the "Strike Team") and the  
Grace Church Adult Bell Choir  
play the music of Christmas,  
directed by  
Lisa Wolfanger  
Sunday, December 22, 9:45 a.m.  
Fellowship Hall





# CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

Tuesday, December 24

## CHRISTMAS EVE

**4:15 and 6:00 p.m.**

**Lessons and carols led by the children of Grace**

**8 p.m. Holy Communion**

**10:45 p.m. Candlelight Holy Communion**

**Music at 10:30 p.m.**

Wednesday, December 25

## CHRISTMAS DAY

**10 a.m. Holy Communion**

Tuesday, December 31

## NEW YEAR'S EVE

**7 p.m. Holy Communion**

Wednesday, January 1

## NAME OF JESUS — NEW YEAR'S DAY

**10 a.m. Holy Communion**

Sunday, January 5

## EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

**10 a.m. Holy Communion**

**Brunch is served in Fellowship Hall after the service.**

## Altar Guild Advent Tea

You are cordially invited to an Advent Tea, Saturday, December 14, 12:15 -1:15 p.m., in the Grace Church library, hosted by Altar Guild members.

Guests will learn more about the group's essential and rewarding service to the congregation. Current members will review updated protocols.

Individuals, families, youth and couples are all welcome to serve with the Altar guild! Please join us as we prepare and proclaim "the gifts of God, for the people of God." For more information contact Roberta Gillespie (708-771-9428) or the church office (366-6900).

## Morning Prayer and Christmas lunch

**Served by the Cornerstone cooks**

**Wednesday, December 11, 11:30 a.m.**

Morning Prayer for Advent followed by Christmas music from Grace School students

**Lunch in Fellowship Hall.** All are invited—seniors, Grace members, school parents, and guests!



# ADULT EDUCATION

Adult Education classes meet at 9:45 a.m. on Sunday mornings in the lower-level Seminar Room. Classes are led by Grace members and guest speakers. If you have suggestions for Adult Ed programming, please contact Ted Anton of the Adult Education Committee (tanton@depaul.edu) or Pastor Dave Wegner (dwegner@graceriverforest.org).

## December 8

### **Faith Community Nursing**

#### **Pat Gulik, Parish Nurse**

Faith community nursing is a recognized specialty practice that combines professional nursing and health ministry. Pat Gulik, Grace's Parish Nurse, will talk about her ministry as an advocate for health and healing.

## December 15

### **Religion Books of 2018**

#### **Elizabeth Palmer, Book Review Editor**

#### **The Christian Century**

Elizabeth Palmer will talk about her work and the important books in religion published in the past year.

## **Sunday Bible Study**

Led by Bob Jandeska, the Bible study group meets on Sunday mornings at 9:45 in the Conference Room on the lower level.

## **GIFT Sunday**

### **Remember Your Baptism**

**Sunday, January 12, 9:45 a.m., Fellowship Hall**

The texts for the First Sunday After Epiphany focus on Jesus' baptism, the beginning of his public ministry. It's also a day to remember our own baptismal vocation. Join Grace members of all ages for activities and conversation on another Sunday of GIFT — Growing In Faith Together.

# Advent and Christmas reading from the church library

We fill these upcoming days and weeks with parties, family time, traditions, and travel. If you find yourself in a quiet moment – or desire to carve one out of a busy schedule – take a look at these resources curated by the Grace Church Library volunteers. Children and adults will find meaningful reflections of the Advent and Christmas seasons both in the library and on display in the atrium display cases.

## **Advent**

**Names for the Messiah: An Advent Study** by Walter Brueggemann. Westminster John Knox Press, 2016. [232 BRU]

**God is in the Manger: Reflections on Advent and Christmas** by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Westminster John Knox Press, 2010. [242 BON]

**Rise Up, Shepherd: Advent Reflections on the Spirituals** by Luke A. Powery. Westminster John Knox Press, 2017. [POW 242]

## **Christmas**

**The Women of Christmas: Experience the Season Afresh with Elizabeth, Mary and Anna** by Liz Curtis Higgs. WaterBrook Press, 2013. [232.9 HIG]

**Meditations on Mary** by Kathleen Norris. Illustrated. Viking, 1999. [232.91 NOR]

**Hidden Christmas: The Surprising Truth Behind the Birth of Jesus** by Timothy Keller. Viking, 2016. [232.92 KEL]

**Child in the Manger: The True Meaning of Christmas** by Sinclair B. Ferguson. Versa Press, 2015. [242 FER]

**Unto Us is Born: Christmas Conversations with the Mother of Jesus** by Herbert Brokering. Augsburg, 1999. [242.33 BRO]

**Christmas with Dietrich Bonhoeffer** by Manfred Weber. Augsburg, 2005. [263 WEB]

**Unwrapping the Greatest Gift: A Family Celebration of Christmas** by Ann Voskamp. Tyndale, 2014. [249 VOS]

**A Chic and Simple Christmas: Celebrate the Holiday Season with Ease and Grace** by Fiona Ferris. Self-published, 2016. [394.26 FER]

**A Child's Christmas in Wales** by Dylan Thomas. Candlewick Press, 2004. [791.45 THO; DVD 791.45 THO]

The library is open for self-service during the week. All are welcome to check out books. Please ask the person at the reception desk for assistance checking out books in the atrium case.

# Advent Thankoffering

*Gifts of gratitude and joy celebrating God's gift of Jesus*

As we prepare during this Advent-tide for Jesus' birth, we join with Christians throughout the world in celebrating this great gift God has given to us. And in gratitude we share our time and treasure with a joyfulness of heart. Our gifts to support ministry at Grace Church impact the lives of others, in ministry here at Grace, in our community and around the world.

During the Advent and Christmas season, we ask that you prayerfully consider making a financial gift to Grace that reflects your gratitude and joyfulness for all God's blessings. Whether it's an additional gift in the offering plate, an online gift, a gift of stock or other assets, or funds from an IRA distribution, your gift will help Grace continue to carry out its ministry to share the good news of Jesus' love with others. Thank you for your generous support of Grace Lutheran Church and School.

*A gift of assets or a gift from an IRA distribution may provide tax advantages. Jim McClanahan can provide an overview; contact him in the Grace business office at extension 202. Please talk with your financial advisor about your specific situation.*

## From the Stewardship Committee

Thank you to everyone who has submitted Faith Promise cards. If you haven't returned your card, you still have time!

So far, we have received 160 pledges totaling \$1,002,000. This is about \$86,000 more than last year's total pledges of \$916,000.

Faith Promise cards are available in the racks by the Division Street door, in the narthex, and by the reception desk. You can turn in your Faith Promise card by either placing it in the offering plate or submitting it to the business office.

*Do you know if your employer offers a match program?* Many companies will match your donations to Grace Church or to Grace Lutheran School. Be sure to ask about your company's donation match program.

## FINANCIAL UPDATE

Grace Lutheran Church General Fund

### Church budgeted contributions

July 1 – November 21, 2019 \$ 816,000  
(20 Sundays, \$40,800 per week)

### Church actual contributions

July 1 – November 21, 2019 \$ 530,000  
(Last year at this time: \$545,000)

Church giving is \$286,000 below budget and \$15,000 behind last year. The deficit as of November 21 was \$269,000.

At its monthly meeting on November 21, Church Council voted to authorize a margin loan of \$150,000 to fund operations.

## Benefit Dinner for the Center for Christian Education in Martin, Slovakia

**Friday, January 17, 5:30 p.m.  
Fellowship Hall**

**Cocktails, dinner and silent auction to support the Center for Christian Education in Martin, Slovakia.**

**Tickets available in the atrium in January, or online at [GraceRiverForest.org](http://GraceRiverForest.org)**





# How to stay healthy, sane and spiritually grounded during the Christmas season

by **Pat Gulik, RN**  
**Parish Nurse**

Maintaining our health, both physical and spiritual, can take a back seat to all the other things going on during the holiday season. Cooking, shopping, *eating*, entertaining, holiday parties, *eating*, houseguests, and ... more *eating*. All of these things can be fun, but they can also be stressful, time-consuming, and ultimately, bad for our health.

Here are some ways that you can minimize all the less-than-healthy things we tend to do during the holidays, so that you can maintain your physical and spiritual health, and still have a wonderful, meaningful Christmas.

**Take time to reflect and plan.** What does this season mean to you? What is important about it, and who is most important? Make the answers to these questions the intentional focus of your holidays instead of the distractions of stuff, shopping, and meaningless events.

**Try to maintain some balance.** Remember that spiritual wellness is connected to physical wellness. Many of the things that we do during this season cause us to overindulge. The cold weather can also make us feel lazy. It's important to do things to maintain our physical health. This includes:

- **Regular exercise** (also a great stress reducer). This might be making time for your regular workout, or simply taking a long walk every day.
- **Sleep.** Get at least seven hours of sleep every night.
- **Eat healthy foods most days of the week, and limit alcohol intake.** Don't try to diet during the holidays. Setting a goal of maintaining your present weight is a much more realistic goal. You can indulge now and then for a special event, but try to eat well otherwise. At parties and other events try to alternate drinking

water with alcoholic beverages to decrease your alcohol consumption.

• **Take care of yourself.** Even if you decide on your priorities, make a plan to maintain balance, and say no to things that don't work for you, the Christmas season can still be busy and somewhat stressful. Try to mitigate this by doing at least one thing to take care of yourself every day. This can be an activity that you love with family or friends, meditation, yoga, a walk around the neighborhood, or simply making time to do absolutely nothing. If you do overindulge, don't give up — just resolve to go back to your plan.

**Keep a positive attitude.** As much as we may enjoy the company of our loved ones, holiday gatherings can cause anxiety. Family time can bring up some of the worst emotions — perhaps brought on by the forced socializing with toxic relatives, bad memories of past holiday seasons, or things currently going on in your life. Try to prepare ahead of time and develop a plan to deal with problems that may come up. Practice what you will say to the cousin who always seems to say something that upsets you. Plan ahead of time with a trusted family member what you will do if things become too stressful and you need to leave a gathering. But, in addition to planning for what to do if something becomes too stressful, try to keep your thoughts positive, and be understanding of others. They are probably stressed, too.



Image by congerdesign from Pixabay.

**This is the season for giving.** Plan some time to share your blessings with others. There are so many ways to give. Help the homeless or hungry either with your time or your treasure, provide Christmas gifts to people in need through a social service agency, invite a friend or acquaintance who has no family nearby to your home for a holiday meal, take time to call or visit someone who is homebound. The list goes on and on. Your generosity will help the recipient and will also help you. Studies have shown that giving is good for our health!

**Give God a gift — from you to God.** Perhaps your gift will be to commit to spending time with God daily. Or maybe there is something that God has asked you to give up. Maybe your gift will be to forgive someone you needed to forgive a long time ago. Whatever it is, make this your most important gift of the season.

**Finally, be grateful.** This is also the season to be thankful. No matter what we are facing, we can all be grateful for the gift of life. Every day we are on this earth is another opportunity to make a difference and to celebrate life.



# Women @ Grace news

## Christmas ornaments for sale

Women@Grace are selling pewter Christmas ornaments, designed by Grace School alum Deirdre Olson: a tower ornament (\$20) and a nativity (\$10). They will be available in the atrium on Sunday mornings through December 22 (while supplies last). Or contact Eileen Maggio in the school office during the week (708-366-6900). Proceeds support the new playground project at the Center for Christian Education in Martin, Slovakia.



## Cookie Walk supports the CCE

Women @ Grace need dozens and dozens of homemade Christmas cookies, candies and treats for the Cookie Walk between services on Sunday, December 15, and for the reception following the Advent/Christmas concert later that day.

Please drop off your cookie donations in the warming kitchen at Grace on Saturday, Dec. 14, 9 a.m.– noon, or Sunday, Dec. 15,

before 8:30 a.m. Proceeds from the Cookie Walk will be donated to the new playground at the Center for Christian Education in Martin, Slovakia.

## Flowers, food and fellowship

Join Women@Grace at Blumen Floral Arrangements on Friday, December 13, at 11 a.m. or 7:30 p.m., and create a winter outdoor arrangement to take home with you. The floral studio is located at 222 Forest Avenue, River Forest. Appetizers and refreshments will be served. The cost is \$65. All materials will be supplied. Space is limited. Please sign up at [sabinesblumen.com](http://sabinesblumen.com) and choose the morning or evening event on December 13. Please contact Diana Sicuro with questions (708-997-0215; [dianamaries@aol.com](mailto:dianamaries@aol.com)).

# We care for our neighbors through Social Ministry projects

## Toiletries collection

The toiletries collection for stockings for The Night Ministry runs through December 8.

Needed are items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo and conditioner, wide-toothed combs, hand and foot warmers, warm socks (adult size), small sewing kits, pens and small note pads, and decks of cards. These will be distributed to homeless teens who are clients of The Night Ministry in Chicago.

Grace School children are also participating in this project. Their recent pizza lunch fundraiser netted over \$1200 to buy items for the stockings. It will be their job to fill them, assembly-line style, later this month.

## Giving Tree/Mitten Tree

Social Ministry's Christmas tree in the atrium welcomes decorations of gloves, mittens, hats and scarves for children in need. Bring your donations to the atrium beginning December 8.

## The benefit brunch for Hope for Grieving Children has been postponed

Contact Tony Stephens for more information ([tonystephens@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tonystephens@sbcglobal.net)), or visit [hopeforgrievingchildren.org](http://hopeforgrievingchildren.org).



Participants in the fall New Members class were received into church membership on Sunday, November 24: Joan and Sam Dyer with McKenna; Justin and Emily Hartung, Austin and Olivia; Nikki and Finley Schmidt; Andrea Pfeiffer; Liz and John Rudy; Sabrina Maggio (with husband Peter); Anna Watson; Karen Eckstein, and Anna Beyersdorf. Not pictured: Erica, John and Evelyn Gniska; Ali, Steve, Wyatt and Connor Mroczkowski.

## GRACE NEWS

**KNITTING/CROCHETING GROUP** meets on Tuesday, December 17, at 1 p.m. in the church library. Come and work on prayer shawls or prayer squares, or bring your own project. All are welcome, including beginners!

**RETIRED LEADERS AND OTHERS** meet on Tuesday, December 10, at 10 a.m. in the sanctuary. Steve Wentz of Concordia University is the guest speaker, focusing on Advent music. Guests are welcome.

**GRACE NOTES MAILING CREW** welcomes helpers to work on the January newsletter on Thursday, January 9, at 9:30 a.m. in the church library.

**CORNERSTONES** fellowship and Bible study meets on Wednesday mornings, December 4, 11, and 18. Come for snacks and fellowship at 10 a.m. followed by Bible study led by the pastors at 10:30. Advent Morning Prayer follows at 11:30 a.m., with lunch served in Fellowship Hall on December 4 and 11. All are welcome at the luncheon, prepared by Cornerstone Cooks.

**RELIGION IN LITERATURE.** The Religion in Literature group will celebrate its 41st anniversary with appetizers and dessert on Friday, December 13, 7 p.m. (note the earlier starting time) at the home of the Baumgaertners, 841 W. Monroe St., #5PH, Chicago. The group will do a dramatic reading of the riotous Act V of Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Copies will be available, or you may bring your own. All are welcome — old-timers and newcomers. Carpooling is encouraged. For more information, contact Jill or Martin Baumgaertner (312-829-0290; jill.baumgaertner@wheaton.edu).

**YOGA CLASSES,** taught by Ackli Howell, meet on Thursday at 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall on December 5 and 12, and will resume on January 9. Bring a mat, beach towel or small blanket, and wear comfortable clothing that allows you to move. Questions? Call Ackli at 708-516-2701.

**MOMS OF LITTLES** will not meet on Wednesday evenings in December. Regular meetings resume January 15. Contact Pastor Lauren for more information (lwegner@graceriverforest.org; 708-366-6900 ext 264).

**FINDING HOPE: SUPPORT FOR CHRONIC ILLNESS.** Finding Hope is an informal monthly gathering that provides support, fellowship and education for people experiencing all types of chronic illness. The group meets on Friday, December 13, 10–11 a.m., in the church library.

## PASTORS' EMERGENCY PHONE

Call 708-689-3032 for emergency pastoral care on weekends, or when the Grace building is closed.

### Holiday building hours at Grace

<b>Tuesday, Dec. 24</b>	Closed until 3 p.m. when seating opens for the 4:15 service.
<b>Wednesday, Dec. 25</b>	Open for worship at 10 a.m.
<b>Tuesday, Dec. 31</b>	Closed during the day. Open for the 7 p.m. worship service.
<b>Tuesday, Jan. 1</b>	Open for worship at 10 a.m.
<b>Dec. 26 – Jan. 6</b>	Weekdays, open 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
<b>Saturdays</b>	Open from 8:30 a.m. to noon.

## PRAYERS

**PRAYER LIST.** The weekly Prayer List can be found in the worship bulletin on Sunday. Contact Karen Christopher (kchristopher@graceriverforest.org; 708-366-6900 ext 207) to be included on the prayer list.

**PRAYER CHAIN.** Contact Kathy Lucht (kathy.lucht@gmail.com) or Kathy Garness (708-366-7584; KMG fine arts@comcast.net) with confidential prayer chain requests.

## THANK YOU

**From Al Swanson:** Thank you! I want to thank those friends who provided dinners and food, lent needed items, sent cards, and called, and everyone who kept me and Irmgard in their prayers. The Lord was with me in my fall and has been with me in my continuing recovery. I have always known that the people of Grace care and are supportive but experiencing that care and support first-hand has meant so very much to me. Thank you all.

**From Kathryn Krubsack, niece of Irmgard Swanson:** Praise the Lord! Our prayers have been answered in marvelous ways. My eye treatments in Germany are finished and the results are that in 10 days, my eyes have improved. The prognosis is good. My eyes may continue to improve over the next 3-9 months if I continue the therapy protocol. Please keep me in your prayers for continued recovery. I'm so excited! Thank you so much for all your love and prayers throughout the years and especially for this treatment!

## WE CELEBRATE

**WE CELEBRATE** with Caroline Emery Hermanson, daughter of Catherine Roberts and Kevin Hermanson, granddaughter of Harriet and John Roberts, to be baptized on December 1.

**WE CELEBRATE** with Connor Thomas Mroczkowski, son of Ali and Steve Mroczkowski, to be baptized on December 29.

**WE CELEBRATE** with William Daniel Melville-Gray, son of Maggie Lupiani and Ryan Melville-Gray, to be baptized on January 12.

# News from Grace School

## ***Sixth grade science includes a unit on sound waves. Could there be a better teaching tool than a pipe organ?***

On Wednesday, November 20, Pastor Costello taught science in the choir balcony and demonstrated some basic acoustic principles using organ pipes and the stops on the organ console. Longer pipes produce longer vibrating columns of air; adjusting the length tunes the pipe. Take a given vibration frequency and double it and you get a sound one octave higher. Double it again and the pitch is two octaves higher. Double it again and it's so high that it hurts your ears! Divide that frequency by two, and by two again, and you can feel the air rumbling as the really big pipes sound their low notes.

The sixth graders had lots of questions. It was a little strange to see organ pipes out of their cases behind the carvings in the chancel, and odder still to see Pastor Costello "play" them by blowing into the bottom of the pipe. But it was a pretty cool science lesson, one that helped students appreciate the church organ as well as begin to understand the science of acoustics.

## **Seeking a first grade teacher and a reading specialist**

Grace Lutheran School is seeking a certified teacher for the first grade classroom beginning January 1, 2020, or earlier, as well as a part-time reading specialist. View the job descriptions at [GraceRiverForest.org](http://GraceRiverForest.org) > School.

## **Help families discover Grace Lutheran School!**

Word of mouth is the best kind of advertising for Grace Lutheran School. Do you know families with young children who may be looking for a preschool? Or parents who might be interested in a high quality Christian education for their children in kindergarten through eighth grade? Grace School offers flexible half-day and full-day programs for three- and four-year-olds and full-day kindergarten for five-year-olds, as well as a challenging curriculum for students in grades 1-8.

The school is hosting a First Look Friday on December 20, 8:30-10:30 a.m. and an Open House on Sunday, January 26, 1-2:30 p.m. Invite anyone you know who might be interested. For more information about enrolling students in Grace School, parents can talk with Jenn Beasley, Director of Enrollment and Marketing (708-366-6900, ext. 218; [jbeasley@graceriverforest.org](mailto:jbeasley@graceriverforest.org)).



## CHRISTMAS CAMP

**Saturday, December 14,  
9am-12pm**

**For children age 4 – 3rd grade  
\$5 per child**

**Register at [GraceRiverForest.org](http://GraceRiverForest.org)  
by December 12**

**Games, snacks, crafts and fun for kids,  
while parents get things done!**



*High school youth packed meals with Feed My Starving Children as a November service project. Middle school youth spent an engaging weekend on retreat with other teenagers at Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Center in Oregon, Illinois.*



Non-profit org.  
U. S. Postage  
PAID  
Oak Park, IL  
Permit No 28



**Saturday, December 7, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.**  
**Grace gym**

Seasonal, sustainably produced goods from local farmers and vendors, such as produce, meat, honey, eggs, bread, preserves, and salsas.

Customers using Link/SNAP benefits are eligible to receive up to \$25 in Link Match Coupons to purchase fruits and vegetables.

