

 **Grace Lutheran Church**
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 **Grace Lutheran Church, ELCA**
 Fairmont, MN

WAYS OF GRACE

Our Mission: To boldly live out our faith in Jesus through worship, fellowship, and service to God and our neighbor, here and around the world.


December 2023

MERRY CHRISTMAS!



Our Staff:

- Rev. Dr. Allison Cobb** - Senior Pastor cobb@gracelutheranchurch.org
- Rev. Cheryl Indehar** - Interim Associate Pastor indehar@gracelutheranchurch.org
- Jane Reiman** - Finance Director reiman@gracelutheranchurch.org
- Nicole Kolbe** - Office Administrator office@gracelutheranchurch.org
- Brad Anderson**- Maintenance Emergency contact number: 507- 236-1123
 Office: 507- 238- 4418

 Fairmont Grace Lutheran Church - www.gracelutheranchurch.org

MAY THE LORD BLESS YOU
 AND KEEP YOU
 THE LORD MAKE HIS FACE
 SHINE ON YOU
 AND BE GRACIOUS TO YOU
 THE LORD TURN HIS
 FACE TOWARD YOU
 AND GIVE YOU
PEACE
 NUMBERS 6:24-26



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“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6)



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As I write this month’s newsletter article, it is mid-November, 61 degrees, and a bright sunny day in Southern Minnesota. Something unexpected, energizing, and a wonderful surprise for this time of year. We are entering into a season that I hope finds you amazed and astounded at the ways that God provides bursts of new life as we face both the joys and the challenges that the holidays can bring. As the prophets declared for generations the coming of God’s son who would save the world, Jesus comes to us each day since.

During the month of December, you are invited to hear the Christmas story in a variety of ways here at Grace. Our adult education class will be embarking on an Advent series entitled *The Redemption of Scrooge* and will learn about God’s forgiveness through this wonderful Charles Dickens Christmas classic, *A Christmas Carol*. On Wednesdays, we will have noon and 6:30PM worship where we will sing Holden Evening Prayer, have a short message during the service, and receive communion. During this beloved service, we will hear Mary’s song as she proclaims God’s greatness and care for all people after the angel visits her and she is informed she will bear God’s son.

Each week during Advent, we will light a candle on the Advent wreath and remember the promise of love, peace, joy, and hope that Jesus brings. And, on December 10, at our 10:45am worship service, our children’s choirs will present their Christmas program. We will here the story of Jesus in word, song, and prayer from our youth as they share the excitement of Christ’s coming into the world. And during our Wednesday night meals, I hope you meet Jesus in the people you sit with, listen to their stories, and support them during this season.

We will also meet Jesus this month in the many opportunities we have to reach out to our neighbor. You are invited to shop for a child from the Star Tree, donate a pair of new socks and place them under the Sock Tree, accompany our confirmation students as they carol at Lakeview Methodist Home on Sunday December 10, and volunteer your time to the many ministries at Grace which work together to love God and our neighbor in this community and around the world.

At the same time, despite the twinkling lights, candy canes, and evergreen trees, life can be incredibly difficult. Grief, loneliness, and sickness continue and often worsen when our culture tells us this is a time only for happiness. Knowing that Jesus came to be with us in all of life’s situations, knows our pain and sadness, and loves us along the way is so critically important. This is most often felt in a tangible way by the presence of caring people. From a smile, a handshake, or a greeting, you extend Christ’s love this season as followers of Jesus and may reach someone who needed to receive that love more than we could ever imagine. Thank you for sharing Christ’s hospitality and care!



December 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 8:30am Traditional Worship 9:35am - 10:35am Adult Bible Study 10:45am Contemporary Worship	27 9:00am - 10:00am Staff Meeting 6:00pm Evening CBS 6:30pm Celebration Choir Practice	28 9:00am Common Threads 1:00pm Women's Bible Study 2:00pm Worship Service Aired 2:30pm Weekly Prayer Meeting	29 9:00am - 12:00pm Women's Community Bible Study 4:45pm - 6:30pm Open Door Meal 5:15pm - 6:15pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 5:30pm - 6:25pm BLAST 7:00pm - 8:00pm Confirmation	30	1 1:00pm Worship Service Aired	2 Kinship Community Resiliency Meeting
3 8:30am Traditional Worship 9:35am - 10:35am Adult Bible Study 10:45am Contemporary Worship	4 6:30am - Men's Breakfast, The Ranch 9:00am - 10:00am Staff Meeting 1:00pm Mary Circle 5:30pm Worship Team Meeting 5:30pm CYF Meeting 6:00pm Evening CBS 6:30pm Celebration Choir Practice	5 9:00am Common Threads 9:00am - 3:00pm Common Threads Sewing Bee - Community 1:00pm Women's Bible Study 2:00pm Worship Service Aired 2:30pm Weekly Prayer Meeting	6 9:00am - 12:00pm Women's Community Bible Study 4:45pm - 6:30pm Open Door Meal 5:15pm - 6:15pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 5:30pm - 6:25pm BLAST 7:00pm - 8:00pm Confirmation	7 9:00am - 10:00am Sarah's Circle 9:00am WOTC	8 1:00pm Worship Service Aired	9
10 8:30am Traditional Worship 9:35am - 10:35am Adult Bible Study 10:45am Contemporary Worship 5:00pm Potthoff Birthday Party	11 9:00am - 10:00am Staff Meeting 6:00pm Evening CBS 6:30pm Celebration Choir Practice 6:30pm Shalom Circle	12 9:00am Common Threads 10:00am - 11:00am Lakeview Senior Worship 1:00pm Women's Bible Study 2:00pm Worship Service Aired 2:30pm Weekly Prayer Meeting 5:30pm Service Team Meeting 6:30pm Committee Meetings: Stewardship, Fellowship, & Outreach	13 9:00am - 12:00pm Women's Community Bible Study 10:00am Goldfinch Assisted Living Service 4:45pm - 6:30pm Open Door Meal 5:15pm - 6:15pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 5:30pm - 6:25pm BLAST 7:00pm - 8:00pm Confirmation	14 4:00pm - 6:00pm Aktion Club Theatre	15 Ways of Grace Submission Deadline 1:00pm Worship Service Aired	16
17 8:30am Traditional Worship 9:35am - 10:35am Adult Bible Study 10:45am Contemporary Worship	18 9:00am - 10:00am Staff Meeting 6:00pm Evening CBS 6:30pm Celebration Choir Practice	19 9:00am Common Threads 1:00pm Women's Bible Study 2:00pm Worship Service Aired 2:30pm Weekly Prayer Meeting	20 4:45pm - 6:30pm Open Door Meal 5:15pm - 6:15pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 5:30pm - 6:25pm BLAST 7:00pm - 8:00pm Confirmation	21 First Day of Winter 	22 1:00pm Worship Service Aired	23
24 11:00am Cocoa and Carols Worship 3:00pm Contemporary Christmas Eve Worship 8:00pm Traditional Christmas Eve Worship	25 Merry CHRISTmas!	26 OFFICE CLOSED 2:00pm Worship Service Aired	27 HOLIDAY BREAK: NO SCHEDULED EVENTS	28	29 1:00pm Worship Service Aired	30
31 9:30am Lessons & Carols Worship	1 9:00am - 10:00am Staff Meeting 1:00pm Mary Circle 5:30pm Worship Team Meeting 6:00pm Evening CBS 6:30pm Celebration Choir Practice	2 9:00am Common Threads 9:00am - 3:00pm Common Threads Sewing Bee - Community 1:00pm Women's Bible Study 2:00pm Worship Service Aired 2:30pm Weekly Prayer Meeting	3 4:45pm - 6:30pm Open Door Meal 5:15pm - 6:15pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 5:30pm - 6:25pm BLAST 7:00pm - 8:00pm Confirmation	4 9:00am - 10:00am Sarah's Circle 9:00am WOTC	5 1:00pm Worship Service Aired	6

Sunday, December 3 - First Sunday of Advent

Stir up your power, and come! The psalmist's plea in Psalm 80:2 has become familiar to us in the Advent prayers. Isaiah wants God to rip the heavens open. Both cry out for an apparently distant, angry God to show up, to save, to restore. When we hear Jesus describing the coming of the Son of Man with stars falling from heaven, it can sound dire and horrible, not like anything we would ever hope for. But when we really look at the suffering of people God loves, we can share the hope that God would tear open the heavens and come.

First Reading: Isaiah 64:1-9
Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Gospel: Mark 13:24-37

Sunday, December 10 - Second Sunday of Advent

John calls people to repent, to clear the decks, to completely reorder their lives so that nothing gets in the way of the Lord's coming. The reading from Isaiah gives the context for this radical call: the assurance of forgiveness that encourages us to repent; the promise that the coming one will be gentle with the little ones. Isaiah calls us all to be heralds with John, to lift up our voices fearlessly and say, "See, your God is coming!" We say it to one another in worship, in order to say it with our lives in a world in need of justice and peace.

First Reading: Isaiah 40:1-11
Second Reading: 2 Peter 3:8-15a
Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

Sunday, December 17 - Third Sunday of Advent

"Rejoice always," begins the reading from 1 Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. "All God's children got a robe," go the words of a spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes we are happy to wear. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God's party.

First Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
Gospel: John 1:6-8, 19-28

Sunday, December 24 - Fourth Sunday of Advent

God keeps the promise made to David to give him

an everlasting throne. The angel tells Mary that God will give David's throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel's greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, "Count me in." We who know that Jesus is called king only as he is executed still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary today we hear the news of what God is up to and say, "Count us in."

First Reading: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Second Reading: Romans 16:25-27
Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

Sunday, December 31 - First Sunday of Christmas

The psalmist calls on the natural world, celestial bodies, fire and earth, creatures, and all humanity, to praise God. The voices of Simeon and 84-year-old Anna join the chorus today, recognizing what God is doing in Jesus. Simeon's song is often sung after communion, for we have seen God's salvation in the assembled community and have held Jesus in our hands in the bread. Then, like the prophet Anna, we tell of Jesus to all who look for the healing of the world.

First Reading: Isaiah 61:10--62:3
Second Reading: Galatians 4:4-7
Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

Sunday, January 1 - Epiphany of Our Lord

The feast of Epiphany ("manifestation") concludes the Christmas season with a celebration of God's glory revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. In Isaiah and Ephesians, that glory is proclaimed for all nations and people. Like the light of the star that guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ reveals who we are: children of God who are claimed and washed in the waters of baptism. We are sent out to be beacons of the light of Christ, sharing the good news of God's love to all people.

First Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6
Second Reading: Ephesians 3:1-12
Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12



On Christmas Eve, there are three worship offerings to help you connect to Christ's story of his birth. We will offer a new service this year at 11AM called *Cocoa and Carols*. During this casual service around tables in the fellowship hall, we will sing Christmas carols, read the Christmas story from the gospel of Luke, and have communion together. Cocoa and candy canes for all ages will round out this special unique worship experience. Later that afternoon, we will offer our contemporary service in the sanctuary at 3pm and our traditional service at 8pm, both with communion and candlelight while we sing *Silent Night*.

As you gather this season, and we celebrate the gift of our Savior, thank you for the gift you are to Grace. This community of faith would not be able to minister in the ways it does without your time, skills, and financial support. The Holy Spirit has been at work at Grace in this past year, and will continue to be, as we discern where God is leading Grace next. It is a true blessing to serve as your pastor, to get to know you more each year, and walk together on our faith journey. My prayer is that you and your family will experience God's love and peace this Christmas and into the New Year!

God bless!

Pastor Allison

Congratulations to our 2023 Confirmands!
May God bless you and may you always remain strong in your faith!



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

- Sundays:** 8:30AM Traditional
10:45AM Contemporary
- Tuesdays:** 2:00PM Fairmont Cable TV Channel 12
(pre-recorded)
- Wednesdays:** 6:30PM WOW, Worship on Wednesday!
- Fridays:** 1:00PM Fairmont Cable TV Channel 12
(pre-recorded)



*Communion is offered each Sunday and Wednesday.

*Sunday services will be streamed on Facebook, YouTube, and our webpage.

Goldfinch Senior Living Worship Service is the 2nd Wednesday of the month, 10AM on Assisted Living side with Communion. Every 2nd Tuesday of the month, 10AM, at Lakeview Methodist home, with communion. Please come and worship with our friends and members of Grace!

CHRISTMAS EVE SCHEDULE



Sunday, December 24:

- Cocoa and Carols Worship: 11:00AM, Fellowship Hall
- Contemporary Christmas Eve Worship, 3:00PM, Sanctuary
- Traditional Christmas Eve Worship, 8:00PM, Sanctuary



A Service of Lessons and Carols: On Sunday, December 31, we will have once worship service at 9:30AM. Come for a special service of readings, singing, communion, and prayer. Hope to see you there!

"The True Christmas Story"
A Christmas Program Presented By
Grace Lutheran BLAST Children
Sunday, December 10, 2023
10:45 a.m. Service



Grace's December Office Hours

Monday - Thursday: 9:00AM - 3:00PM

Office will be closed: Monday, Dec 25th & Tuesday, Dec 26th



CHILDREN, YOUTH, & FAMILY

WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE

Open Door Meal: 4:45PM - 6:30PM - All are invited to the Fellowship Hall for a meal.

BLAST, PreK - 6th Grade: 5:30PM - 6:30PM - This includes Cherub & Alleluia Choir, learning lessons, and fun!

Wednesday Worship: 6:30PM - 7:00PM

Confirmation, 7th-10th Grade: 6:30PM - 7:30PM

We are so thankful as we reflect on this past year within Children, Youth and Family Ministry at Grace! Our team has learned so much. We continue to strive to find smooth and effective ways moving forward. Lets take a walk through the year!

This spring, end of the year celebrations took place with BLAST students having ice cream sundaes & playing games on the south lawn. Confirmation groups had a pizza party at BowlMor Lanes.

This summer, we had an amazing Vacation Bible School Day camp, with counselors from Ingham Lake Okoboji! Students 3 years old through 6th grade learned about "Uncovering Gods Truth" and Jesus's love. Our youth raised \$301 with offering during the week! WOW! Money was then donated to the Martin County Humane Society. Our dog friend, Fanta, found his forever home shortly after. The week concluded with root beer floats, singing, and pie in the face for counselors, Pastor Cheryl and Nicole Kolbe! What a fun week of memories made!

In September, we kicked off the school year with a back to fall night! It was so wonderful to see our BLAST and Confirmation students along with their families - seeing the redecorated classrooms, meeting their teachers and a quick treat in the new choir room with Kris Tillotson & Carol Madsen! We are so grateful for all of the volunteers who made this school year get off to a great start. We couldn't have done any of it without you- decorators, teachers, office personal, and of course our Youth! **THANK YOU!**

On September 17th, our second and third graders were recognized as they received their very own Bible and Blessing. God's blessings to them as they seek and learn Gods word throughout their lives. *Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. Psalm 25:4-5*

On October 29th, 22 confirmands were confirmed. What a special day for them along with their family and friends! God's blessings to all of them! *I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made: your works are wonderful, I know that full and well. Psalm 139:14*

Our Grace youth and families continue to share their time, love and talents with our Congregation as well as within our community. Through their acts, Gods love and Jesus's good news spreads!

Please join us as we celebrate "The True Christmas Story" at our Christmas Program to be held on Sunday, December 10th @ 10:45 AM.

Christmas Blessings,
Children, Youth & Family Ministry



Youth Trip Coordinator Volunteer Needed!

CYF is looking for a lead volunteer to plan future youth trips for students! Some duties would include coordinating details of location and lodging, finding volunteer chaperones, assist with fundraising events for donations, and work with the CYF Team and Pastors on trip details and itinerary. Please contact the office if interested!



Mid-week Advent Worship: The season of Advent begins on Sunday, December 3 as we await the coming of Emmanuel God with Us. Each week in worship, we will be lighting one candle of the Advent wreath and sing hymns proclaiming the coming of Jesus. On Wednesdays, we will worship at Noon and 6:30PM as we sing Holden Evening Prayer. This peaceful and contemplative worship service speaks to Christ's coming as we hear the words of Mary that she proclaimed after the angel announced that she would bring God's son into the world. The Noon service will be held in the chapel and the evening service in the sanctuary. Confirmation students will worship in the evening with their mentors, followed by discussion, from 6:30-7:30PM.

Christmas Caroling at Lakeview Methodist Home: Join our confirmation students as they go caroling at Lakeview Methodist Home on Sunday, December 10 at 4:45PM. We will walk to each dining room and sing a few carols at each stop. After caroling, we will have cookies and parents may pick up their students at 6:30PM. Wear your fun festive attire and ugly Christmas sweaters as we bring joy and cheer to our neighbors. If you would like more information, please see Pastor Allison.



The Gift of Final Wishes: During this time of giving, one of the most helpful gifts we can give our loved ones is to have our final wishes written down. Join the pastors on Sunday, January 7 between the services and talk about what questions are typically asked when planning a funeral. What are your chosen scripture readings, hymns, organ or piano, special music, military honors, favorite memories, and so much more. The best gift we can give our loved ones is to take the stress away in planning our church service. Come to learn more, walk through Grace's funeral planning guide, and take it home to make selections and talk with your family. When you are finished, please bring a copy of your wishes to Grace and we will keep it on file for you. Funeral guides can be found on our Care Table in the gathering space as well as under the *Resources* tab on our webpage. For more information, please see Pastor Allison.



Pizza with the Pastors: For everyone who is new to Grace, who have recently joined the church and those who may want to join in the future, come for a fun lunch with the pastors! Join us for a time of getting to know one another, learning about the ways to plug into Grace, and answering any questions you might have. We will meet at Noon in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday, January 7. Please let the office know if you plan to attend so we can order the right amount of pizza. Hope to see you there!



Mark Your Calendars: The Annual Meeting at Grace is on Sunday, January 21 between the services. We will meet in the fellowship hall for discussion, and over donuts and coffee, talk about the wonderful ways God is at work at Grace through our ministries. This is a great opportunity to discern together about where the Spirit is leading us in the new year. A pre-budget meeting will be held the prior Sunday, January 14 between the services to answer questions and discuss the financial picture of Grace. We need a quorum for this meeting so please plan to attend!



Memorials:

Leon Gerkin Memorial

Ardel Prescott Stained Glass Windows

Randy Cress Memorial

Richard & Deb Schammel Stained Glass Windows

Velma Vickerman Missions

Joan Engquist Memorial

Harry & Chery Brumbaugh Stained Glass Windows

Tari Riley

Jenelle Cunning

Linda Shaw

Patricia Jones

Mark & Ilene Reiter

Renee Tillotson

Rod & Diane Palmquist

Lee & Laurel Engquist

Laraine & Harlan Gorath People Helping People

Marian Johnson

Mary Setterlund Undesignated

Robert Zemke Memorial

Michelle & John Bisbee Stained Glass Windows

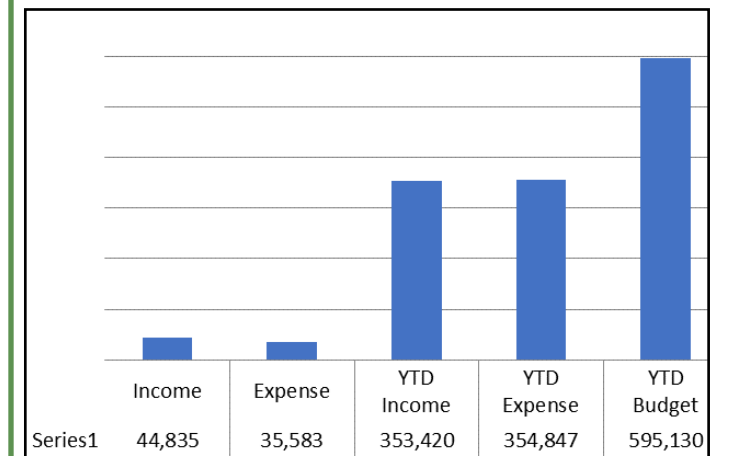
Patricia Jones Undesignated

Larry Moholander Memorial

Ardel Prescott Stained Glass Windows

Council Minutes Will Be Published in the January Ways of Grace.
Thank you for your patience and understanding!

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT FOR OCTOBER



December Open Door Meal Menu

Join us in the Fellowship Hall on Wednesday evenings from 4:45 - 6:30 PM

Dec 6: Creamed Chicken on Biscuit

Dec 13: Sloppy Joes

Dec 20: Meatballs

Dec 27: Christmas Break, NO MEAL

