

The King's

Business



Grace Lutheran

179 Holiday Island Drive
Holiday Island, AR 72631

479-253-9040

www.gracelutheranhi.org



December 2023

We at Grace Lutheran Church are called to reach, teach and be the people of God, as stewards of the Word and gifts of God.

From The Pastor's Desk

Dear Grace Family,

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

It's true! With the arrival of the First Sunday of Advent that part of the Holy Christian Church on earth that follows the Church Year celebrates the New Church Year.

As you know, as we gather for Divine Service on the First Sunday of Advent we once again begin the journey following the prophecies concerning the birth of the Messiah, the promised Savior. The Church Year then guides us through the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Imanuel:

God with us. It then leads us into the long reflecting upon what He has done for us and what it means to be a Christian. The Church Year then concludes with the Last Sunday once again, as we celebrated last Sunday.

This has been the case for the past couple of centuries, and will continue until Christ returns to gather believers to join Him eternally in the new heaven and new earth...the heavenly Jerusalem.

This year the four Sunday of Advent bring us to Christmas Eve on December 24th. On that Evening we will gather for the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service in the joyful celebration of the birth of our Savior with a lot of music and candles as we are drenched in the love and forgiveness bestowed upon us.

As part of our preparation for the celebration of the birth of our Savior we will gather each Wednesday evening for the Midweek Advent Services. This year the theme of these services will be "*A Child Is Born in Bethlehem.*"

O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, you are little among the clans of Judah. But out of you will come forth a ruler for Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. (Micha 5:2)

The birth of **Christ** was the climax of a number of significant births that took place in Bethlehem:

On December 6 we will remember that Jacob's beloved Rachel dies in childbirth as **Benjamin** is born at Bethlehem.

[continued next page]

On December 13 we will remember God's gift of family as Ruth and Naomi rejoice—after years of poverty and widowhood—at the birth of **Obed** (eventually David's grandfather).

On December 20 we will remember **David**, Bethlehem's most famous son to date, and how his birth looks forward to Christ as

shepherd-king.

On Christmas Eve Jacob and Ruth and David will gather at **the Christmas manger** to see the fulfillment of all that God had foreshadowed through them.

Let me take this time to encourage you to find ways to slow down this Advent, and take time to ponder the coming birth of the promise

Savior and what it means for you.

Looking forward to seeing you throughout the Advent and Christmas Seasons,

In His Service and Yours
Pastor Schultz

Christians Don't "Pass Away":



The expression "pass away" is a ubiquitous term among English speakers. It's a euphemism intended, in kindness, to soften the blow of death. I'm certain. No one uses "pass away" to mislead anyone. But, the term conceals reality. And, it fails to confess the great news for Christians in the bitterness of death.

A euphemism is simply a good sounding word to use in place of a term that may be profane, uncomfortable, hurtful, or off-putting. The Greek rooting of "euphemism" means nearly the same: good speaking. The good speaking serves to conceal or soften uncomfortable things.

I can't speak to the origin of "pass away" in common parlance for death. The funeral industry has certainly embraced the use of it. Again, this isn't a malicious use of the euphemism. They are likely trying to protect people's feelings.

But, there may have been a theological driver here too.

For some folks, we may not be able to confidently speak well of their state after death. With no evidence of Christianity, there's no hope of salvation or resurrection to eternal life. We should and do hope that something is hidden from us. But, some dwell in sin and separation from God by their own doing.

Other Christian traditions place great importance on our actions regarding God. A Baptist may be disinclined to trust in infant baptism. They believe that, contrary to the scriptures, a person must make a public confession as an adult and be baptized for the first time, or again, as an outward sign of the internal decision to accept Jesus. When a Romanist or a Lutheran dies, the Baptist may not have a full-throated confidence in their rest in Christ. This finds confidence in the works and words of man, not God.

We begin the funeral service with a remembrance of Baptism. That's the key for Christianity. Pastor starts, "In Holy Baptism [the deceased] was clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness that covered all his or her sin. St. Paul says: "Do you not know that

all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" (Romans 6:3) The congregation speaks along, "We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His." (Roman 6:4)

But I digress. Let's get back to the euphemistic "passing away" as a term for death. Do the scriptures speak about passing away? Yup, they sure do.

"Terrors are turned upon me; my honor is pursued as by the wind, and my prosperity has passed away like a cloud." (Job 30:15) This is negative. For Job, all the good things of his life, before his affliction, have passed away.

"I have seen a wicked, ruthless man, spreading himself like a green laurel tree. But he passed away, and behold, he was no more; though I sought him, he could not be found." (Psalm 37:35-36) This is negative. In the Psalms, wicked things, wicked people, and the brokenness of a fallen creation pass away.

[continued next page]

“[The Assyrian’s] rock shall pass away in terror, and his officers desert the standard in panic,” declares the LORD, whose fire is in Zion, and whose furnace is in Jerusalem.” (Isaiah 31:9) This is negative. The power of Israel’s oppressor is the thing passing away.

“Woe to those who lie on beds of ivory and stretch themselves out on their couches... Therefore they shall now be the first of those who go into exile, and the revelry of those who stretch themselves out shall pass away.” (Amos 6:4a, 7) This is negative. In the minor prophets, things that pass away are wicked or sinful.

(See also – [Job 6:14-16](#); [Job 11:16](#); [Job 34:18-20](#); [Psalm 90:7-9](#); [Psalm 102:3-5](#); [Psalm 148:5-6](#); [Isaiah](#)

[2:17-18](#); [Jeremiah 8:14](#); [Daniel 7:13-14](#); [Nahum 1:12-13](#); [Zephaniah 2:1-2](#))

Speaking the way the scriptures speak, we are saying that those things which pass away are wicked, evil, sinful, oppressive, or in need of destruction. We ought to speak well of those who have died, even in our simple expressions.

They who rest in Christ have not passed away.

Rev. Jason M. Kaspar, Sole Pastor
Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church & Preschool,
La Grange, TX and mission planting pastoral team:
Epiphany Lutheran Church, Bastrop, TX

©2022 Jason Kaspar. All rights reserved. Permission granted to copy, share and display freely for non-commercial purposes. Direct all other rights and permissions inquiries to cosmithb@gmail.com.

Reports from the Mission Field

Dear Grace Family,

As a means to help us better connect to the work that goes on in the Mission Field, and the work of our LCMS Missionaries, I’ve asked the Rev. Christian Tiews permission to reprint some of his reports in our monthly newsletter. This month, I submit the following. Pastor Schultz



“The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?” (1 Cor 10:16). I recently checked up on an Iranian parishioner whom I had not seen in church for a while. I asked him if he was alright. He replied: “I am not doing well. My spirit is sick or dead.” That was alarming. “How soon can we meet?” I asked. A few days later, over tea and hot chocolate, he shared: “I feel like a zombie. My body is moving, but I think my soul has died.” “Hmm,” I asked, “when was the last time you took Holy Communion?” “I can’t remember,” he answered, his head

drooping. “Do you still read your Bible every day?” “No, I haven’t for a long time. When I stopped going to church, I always hoped someone would check up on me. But no one ever did.” “I am so sorry to hear that,” I offered. “That should not have happened. Please forgive us... But apart from the mistakes that we as a congregation have made, do you know what happens to the Holy Spirit in you when you ignore His gifts of Word and Holy Communion?” “I’m not sure...” “Think of a hot air balloon... On its own, it wants to stay on the ground. That’s like us before our Baptism—not able to reach up to God. To fly, the balloon needs an outside force—the burner and flame. For us, that outside force is the Holy Spirit whom we receive in Baptism. But we need to

keep that flame going by reading our Bible and taking Holy Communion regularly. Ignore those and your spiritual balloon will sink. Do you want the Holy Spirit in you to grow again?” He grinned. “You’re right. I need to start reading my Bible again and go back to church.” Praise God, last Sunday he was back in the Divine Service.

*** Let us continue to check up on and pray for our loved ones who may have drifted away from the church. Let’s encourage them to turn their burners back on, so they can once again receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. After all, “the bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?”

**Rev. Christian C. Tiews
Hamburg, Germany**

WOMEN'S GUILD

DEVOTION by: Jane Smith,
'Nothing to eat' – From: "Devotions from the Kitchen Table"

Election of Officers - The slate of officers was elected by unanimous vote. They will be installed by Pastor Schultz in January along with the Church Council. The officers elected for 2024 are:

President: Stephanie Garrett;
Vice President: Jane Bleser;
Treasurer: Vicki Garrett;
Secretary: Terri Herman.

Thank you for your willingness to service!

December Luncheon - The luncheon will be held **December 5th** at **11:30** here at church. It will be a potluck of either salads or light snack/appetizer items to be brought and shared. We will also have a gift exchange as part of a game. Gift purchases are to be no more than \$20.00; wrapped, but no tag. This is not a White Elephant exchange.

Mission Projects – Barbara Herring

'Into the Light' – trafficking survivors Christmas support. I received the code names and wish lists for two trafficking survivors. Attached is a list. On the attendance list individuals that wanted to contribute to the offerings were asked to sign-up for what they wanted to provide. Mite funds will also be used to cover any additional expenses not covered.

Non-Monetary Mission – Hope Notes – Dakota Boys & Girls Ranch is asking that messages of hope and/or encouragement be sent to the Boys and Girls at Dakota Ranch – **'HOPE NOTES'**. This can be done on-line at: DakotaRanch.org or

by US mail and sending them to:

Dakota Boys & Girls Ranch
Hope Notes
6301 19th Avenue NW
P O Box 5007
Minot, ND. 58702

This is an individual service project – anyone may participate if they choose to.

New Business

CS Bank Parking Fundraiser – WG is on an alternate list and was offered December 16, 2023. Terri accepted on behalf of the Women's Guild.

Angel Tree - Terri asked if there was any interest in participating this year. We are taking care of 'Into the Light' this year and will consider the 'Angel Tree' again next year.

Announcements:

Christmas Lunch – December 5th 11:30. (Gift Exchange \$20.00 or less)

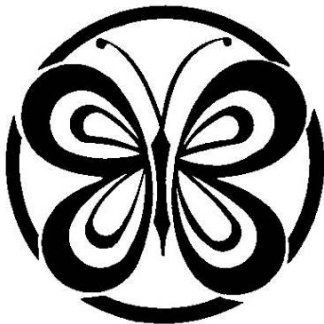
Next Meeting: January 16, 2024
11:00 AM Meeting & 10:00 AM Fellowship.

Devotion: Glenna Cates

Fellowship: Sharon Schultz

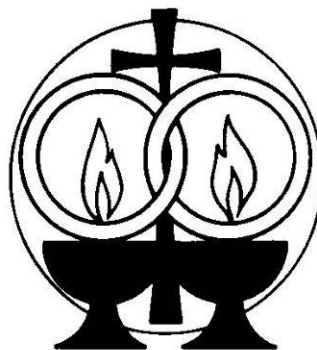
Meeting Adjourned at 12:00 with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted:
Barbara Herring



*December
Birthdays*

Lelis Knuth	2
Barbara Herring	8
Hilda Krutz	11
Joe Steichen	28
Randall Senica	29



*December
Anniversaries*

Gordon & Nancy Harris 5



Men's Fellowship

In December we will again meet on the second Monday as we will redecorating for the Advent/Christmas time. All our men: Please join us!