



GRACE
LUTHERAN CHURCH

1300 Kishwaukee Valley Rd
Woodstock, IL 60098
815 338-0554 - Fax 815 338-0913
E-mail grace@gracewoodstock.org
www.gracewoodstock.org

Grace for Today

NOVEMBER 30, 2011—DECEMBER 13, 2011 • VOLUME 10, NO. 24

Memories Must be Made Before They Can Be Remembered.....by Pastor Ken Gibson

While the above statement may seem a bit obvious, I still find for some reason, that I like the thought that comes when I reflect on the above as a truth. In this now Advent Season of preparation we are all aware of times where some things seem to be a tradition. As we experience these again we come to recall a memory of that same event or experience of the years past. For example how many of us recall a favorite Thanksgiving meal or a favorite pie fest from years past or another past event? Or, dare I suggest it, some favorite Sunday worship experience?

There are other times in our lives when we remember things in a favorable way. When I think about it there seems to be a common theme in our most favored memories. These things may include; a loved event, a loved place, and loved ones. Along with all of these there is, I suggest, a ritual to which all of these can be aligned to make the favorable memory. Recall a favorite family gathering where those we love are present and all share in a mutual event; like a birthday party, a holiday meal, or even a special church service.

Having noted all of the above I am wondering how intentional we are these days on making memories that are worthy of being remembered? Are we making memories with loved ones? Or are there things in the way of us being able to gather together and share in a love that is worthy of becoming a memory? I am not truly aware of any favorable memory in my life where I was alone. I truly cannot remember any favorable loving memory that I did not want to say at least to one other person; “Hey did you see or did you feel or experience that?”

So this Advent I am asking us to consider making memories that are worthy of remembrance. I am asking us all to realize that in the ritual life of the church each week we gather as a family around a meal in love and together we experience the love of God granted through the gift of Jesus Christ his Son. Truly our life together is something worthy of making memorable for our children and ourselves for years to come.

So what are the memories you are making? I pray that they will be filled with love.



Parents Day Out— In an effort to raise money for their New Orleans trip, the high school youth are holding a “Parents Day Out” fundraiser. On **Dec. 10** from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the lower level of the church, the youth will offer babysitting services for parents so they can go Christmas shopping, go out to lunch, take a nap or just have time to be adults. There will be a wide variety of activities offered. If parents choose to leave the children during the lunch hour, we ask that you supply the lunch for your child. An afternoon and morning snack will be provided. You may sign-up in advance (preferred) or drop off that day. The cost is \$5/child/hour or \$10/family/hour for those with more than two children. Donations are welcome as well. If you would like to reserve your spot or just have questions, please contact Barb Christmas at 815-337-8992.

New Men's Ministry—On Saturday morning, Dec. 10th, at 8:30 a.m., Tom Lopez will share the information that he gathered about the Lutheran Men's Ministry workshop that he attended. All men are welcome to attend this informative and exciting new ministry that is being launched at Grace.

WORSHIP TODAY

Sunday, December 4, 2011
Second Sunday of Advent

INTRODUCTION: John called people to repent, to clear the decks, to completely reorder their lives so that nothing would get 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.

READINGS:

Isaiah 40:1-11 Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
2 Peter 3:8-15a Mark 1:1-8

Sunday, December 11, 2011
Third Sunday of Advent

INTRODUCTION: "Rejoice always," begins the reading from First 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 the spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes that make us feel happy just to put on. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God's party.

READINGS:

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 Psalm 126
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 John 1:6-8, 19-28

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.

World: Bishop Hanson, Bishop Wollersheim; those serving in military conflicts, Arusha Town Lutheran Parish in Tanzania (our companion parish), Sgt. Scott Bunch, serving overseas (son of Frank & Joan Bunch), Tyler Stiemke, serving on the USS Bush

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

Health Concerns: Lois Bloese, Rhonda Bobinger (friend of Martha Fleck), Deanna Bohn, Bill Botts, Karen Bremmer (friend of Pastor Ken and Jodi Gibson), Shirley Busse, Evelyn Carlsen (mother of Cathy Meyer), Joe Cherella (friend of Martha & Bill Fleck), Steve Clark (son of Edna Clark), Raymond Cupples Jr. (father of Carrie Fiorina & Amy Piquette), Roberta Deitchler (mother of Katie Arana), Betty Fischer (mother of Connie Fischer), Connie Fischer, Patrick Fraily (friend of August and Theo Hutchens), Matt Gerloff (grandson of Bob Gerloff), Lauren Gibson (daughter of Pastor Ken and Jodi Gibson), Mary Guyett (sister of Doris Sunday), Darrin Hansing (nephew of Ken & Tammy Hansing), Patrice Hoover, August Hutchens, Theo Hutchens, Dwight Jensen, Chris John (friend of Bill and Lynn Nattress) Betty Karsten (sister of Vern Sarbaugh), Pastor Laura Koppenhoefer (N.I.S.), Edie Marvin (niece of Ken & Gladys Renner), Kathy Nordin, Gloria Ogle, Alice Pate, Georgia Petersdorf (sister-in-law of Ken & Gladys Renner), Richard Petersen, Ann Phillips (sister-in-law of Cindy Meyer), Hazel Powell, Shawn Rank (son of Bert & Carol Rank), Wayne Reckamp (husband of Monica Reckamp and co-worker Nora Combs), Russ Reed, Jeff Roberts, Joan Russell (mother of Sheri Conover), Stanley Russell (father of Sheri Conover), Gladys Smart (mother of Deborrah Evanoff), Margaret Stawicki (mother of Nan Goerlitz), Tom Stone (brother Kathy Stone), Alan Swanson (friend of Joe Evanoff), Connie Tarver, Carol Thompson (daughter of Marge Dierksen), Josh Tillman, Janice Torres (mother of Dee Brown), Carrie Vought (sister of Jane Berlin), Eileen White, Richard Young (nephew of Marge Birk), Ruth Zirves

Sorrow: Irene Trumble

Joy: Baptism of Kara Nicole Schultz

If you wish to add a prayer request for this 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. 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 at 815-338-0554.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel...by Pastor Amanda Bergstrom

This past Thanksgiving weekend, as I gathered with part of my extended family for dinner with Grandpa, I joined my sisters and cousins in recalling and naming some of our family's traditions. Some of these necessary details are that each Christmas, Easter, and Thanksgiving we gather as a family at a specific home or restaurant per holiday, the "kids" still sit on one half of the table and the "adults" at the other, and there are certain events that have to take place before we even place our orders when out at one of those restaurants. Even at the "kids" end of the table, we follow a fairly routine line of conversations to catch up with each other's work, school, and social lives. And yet, even in the midst of these predictable routines- we all had a chance to reconnect after an eventful past seven months and can look forward to seeing one another soon for Christmas.

As we enter into a new church year and the season of Advent, I can't help but reflect on my growing appreciation for the seasons of our church year. The predictable rituals, the focus of our prayers and the expectation and fulfillment of traditions keeps me grounded when everything else is changing or swirling around up in the air. By being invited into this season of waiting for Jesus' birth, before celebrating Jesus' birth, and starting anew this church year, I feel better equipped to discover more about God's amazing love. God's love right now is being made known in the stillness and the longing, the prophet's dreams, the eager anticipation of something new. And then, God's love is made known in the newborn babe, the unlikely savior of the world, who in time, will be made known to us too as the crucified and risen one, as the Holy Spirit, the three in one, and once again as a different kind of king. If there is one thing I know to be true about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, it is that the Three in One is far too expansive and amazing for me to wrap my mind around. So as I encounter God in a new way each season of the year, I am glad to be in the midst of some predictable routines where I can reconnect each day, remembering the past, attending to the present, and always looking forward to the coming one, Emmanuel.



The Mitten Trees—It's getting chilly outside and many families do not have extra money to buy warm winter accessories. We can share God's Grace with them by buying new mittens, hats, gloves, scarves, socks, and underwear for the Mitten Trees. Please bring these items to church by **December 11** and hang them on the trees or put them in the boxes under the trees in the narthex or downstairs. These gifts will be greatly appreciated by families in need in Woodstock. Thank you for your donations! ~ Ellie Thurow

Grace Children's Talents Part of Christmas Eve Service—This year our musical children are invited to be part of a music recital that will precede the 4:30 pm Christmas Eve Service. All children and youth who have musical ability may sign up in the activities binder at the Information Center or contact Ron Fredriksen at rfredriksen@gracewoodstock.org to be part of this event. The recital provides an opportunity through which children can share the musical gifts God has given them as they also present them as gifts to the Christ child.



When sending a request to participate, please include the name of the person who will play or sing, a contact for that person, their instrument, the title and composer of the piece, whether an accompanist is needed and the length of the piece. All of this information is needed in order to determine the length of the pre-service recital and let everyone know the order in which the pieces will be presented. Those needing accompanists will be contacted to arrange a rehearsal time prior to Christmas Eve. This information must be received by Sunday **Dec. 11**. We encourage all children who have musical talents to share them in this way.



Were You Baptized at Grace in 2011? - If so, we would like to get your photo for a Baptism Photo Wall. Please forward to Lynn Nattress at lnattress@gracewoodstock.org, or drop off a copy in the church office.

Christmas Family Sharing — YIKES! We're making Christmas lists in our house. That means it is also time to be thinking about our Christmas Family Sharing (CFS) ministry here at Grace. CFS will run just a bit differently this year. This year we will have two options for providing gifts for people in need. The first option will be to provide specific gifts for families who are from the Family Health Partnership Clinic here in Woodstock. As in previous years, you can get specific information and buy presents for one or more family members. We also need people who can provide grocery gift cards. The second option is the new one. We will have a Bethel "Giving Tree" this year. Bethel has started a Christmas Store at which their program participants can buy gifts for their own family members at a greatly reduced cost. Our job is to stock the store with some of the most popular and needed items. We will have our Bethel "Giving Tree" near our CFS table with paper ornaments identifying the needed items. You are invited to take one or more ornaments and purchase that item which will then be used in the Bethel Store. Please come visit the CFS table in the narthex on **December 4th** to ask questions and get your gift buying information. Or feel free to call or email Mary Beth Martin-Bellavia at 815-338-5194 or mbmbxo@ameritech.net.



Bethel Christmas Store Work Day— If interested in working at the Bethel Christmas Store on Saturday **Dec. 17** for the 3-6pm shift, please contact Denise Hoover at 815-260-3698. We will be carpooling. Any children that may want to help must be 12 years of age or older.



Confirmation Pictures— Confirmation pictures are now available in the church office. Any questions, please contact Carrie Fiorina at cfiorina@gracewoodstock.org.

Christmas Decorations —Help provide decorations for our sanctuary this Christmas. Give a gift in "honor of someone" or in memory of a loved one" or "to the glory of God." Forms are available in this week's bulletin or at the Welcome Center in the Narthex. All forms and donations of \$10.50 are due by **December 12**. Following our 10:00 a.m. service on December 25 poinsettias may be taken home or to our shut-ins.



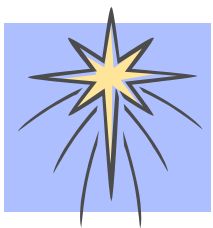
Visit Grace Library—Grace members are invited to visit Grace Library and check out the new books donated recently: **GOD'S SECRETARIES: The Making of the King James Bible**, by Adam Nicolson – a fascinating and dramatic account of the accession and ambition of the first Stuart king and the scholars who labored for seven years to create his Bible. **THE JESUS I NEVER KNEW**, by Philip Yancey – discover a Jesus who is brilliant, creative, challenging, fearless, compassionate, unpredictable and ultimately satisfying, **THE REFORMATION, A History**, by

Patrick Collinson – a concise yet thorough overview of the drastic ecumenical revolution of the late medieval and Renaissance eras. **DO HARD THINGS, A Teenage Rebellion Against Low Expectations**, by Alex and Brett Harris – a glimpse of what is possible for teens who actively resist cultural lies that limit their potential. Written by teens for teens. **DINNER WITH A PERFECT STRANGER, An Invitation Worth Considering**, by David Gregory – fiction; how would you respond to a personal invitation to have dinner with Jesus?

Preschool Safety—During preschool hours, the main preschool entrance doors (downstairs) are locked between 9:15 am and 11:00 am. Any visitors to the building during this time should enter through the main church doors (upstairs) and check in with the church office. Preschool office hours are as follows: Monday & Thursday 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm, Tuesday & Friday 9:00 am to 1:30 pm. Any questions, please contact Chris Learman @ 815-338-0554 x213.

New Member Orientation Breakfast—If you know of anyone interested in membership here at Grace, we will be hosting a new member orientation breakfast on **Jan. 7, 2012** at 10:00 a.m. More information will be coming.

Newsletter Deadline —All *Grace for Today* articles for the December 14th issue should be sent to Lynn Nattress at lnattress@gracewoodstock.org or to the church office by noon on Thursday, December 8th.

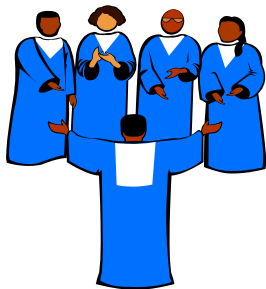


Grace Choirs Illuminate Advent— Special services of music will be presented on Sunday, **December 18** at both 8:30 and 10:45 a.m. The event will renew a long tradition of holiday song that combines treasured Bible passages with both anthems and familiar congregational hymns that reflect the readings. Messenger, Joyful Sound, High School and Chancel choirs will offer anthems that tell the story of God’s great plan for our salvation through Jesus, his son that began before time itself. Featured in the presentation are organist Jan Burns and Oboist Ben Crosby. The music for this 2007 composition is by Aaron David Miller, a prolific composer currently writing in the U.S. Herbert Brokering, a well known writer and lyricist, has created original text to compliment the familiar Bible passages. Readers for our presentations are Paul Lockwood, Abigail Kreznor, Marlene Frisbie and Pastor Amanda and Pastor Ken. The message is given visual dimension by way of the talents of Elizabeth Acosta and Andi Learman who will each dance one of the anthems. Andi will provide the choreography for both dances. The experience will be rounded out as the congregation joins our choirs in singing several seasonal songs. The services will include the lighting of the Advent candle, a children’s message and communion. Directors for the event are Tammy Baier, and Larry Lagerhausen, and Ron Fredriksen is managing director of the presentation. This is our choirs’ major offering of the Advent-Christmas season. Prepare for God’s great gift to us through this beautiful musical rendition that will spiritually assist your preparation to celebrate Jesus coming into our lives. We hope that you will join us!

Senior Luncheon Christmas Party— Tuesday, **December 13th** come and get in the Holiday Spirit with our wonderful Appetizer & Punch Buffet along with a Dessert and Coffee Buffet. Just for fun, we will do a “recycled gift exchange”. Please bring a wrapped gift item that you have at home (no going out to buy anything) that you would like to re-gift. Cost is \$5.00 Please sign up in the activity Binder by **December 11th**.

PADS Volunteers Needed- The Wednesday night PADS program is looking for volunteers to work regular shifts as follows: at the Unitarian shelter, 3rd shift (3-7 am) week 2 and/or week 4 of each month; and at the Free Methodist shelter, 3rd shift (3-7 am) week 1 and/or week 3 of each month. In addition, the Free Methodist shelter is looking for a co-manager for weeks 2 and 4 of each month. If you can help or know someone who might be interested, please contact Joe Blanco (847)814-1385. Thanks for your support of this community ministry.

H.S. Choir Alumni Sought—Singers who have graduated high school in recent years are invited to join the Grace high school choir alumni singers. The group will meet while most singers are home for the holidays and sing on a Sunday during that time. Exact dates depend on the schedules of all involved. Possible rehearsals could be Thanksgiving weekend and before or after Christmas. Target date for Sunday service is Jan. 1 with a possibility of an anthem for Christmas as well. Interested singers should contact Sonja Hutchens or Phillip Meyer, Larry Lagerhausen or Ron Fredriksen (rfredriksen@gracewoodstock.org). Singers do not necessarily need to have sung in the Grace high school choir to be eligible. Come, be part of it. Tell your friends. They are also invited.



Internationally Acclaimed Wartburg College Choir to Visit Grace! - On **April 26th** the Wartburg College Choir under the direction of Dr. Lee Nelson will perform at Grace as a part of their 2012 Wartburg Choir National tour. A choir of around a hundred voices, the Wartburg Choir has a storied and long standing history of excellence in choral music. You will want to be in attendance.

Grace members will also be asked to serve as host families as we will be an overnight stop here in Woodstock. If you think you can host one, two or even more college youth for a night, please contact the church office. Many arrangements are being made to make this a very successful stop and a magical musical evening here at Grace. More details to follow.

Here is your link to the Weekend Worship Participants:

Schedule:<http://www.gracewoodstock.org/WeeklyNews/Monthly%20Worship%20Participants.pdf>

THE WEEKS AHEAD AT GRACE

Saturday, December 3

9:00 AM Band
5:00 PM Worship

Sunday, December 4

8:30 AM Traditional Worship
9:45 AM Education Hour
10:45 AM Contemporary Worship
11:45 AM Adult Bus Trip
2:00 PM Choose Respect Grant Meeting
5:00 PM Youthful Spirit
6:30 PM Graceful Ringers/H.S. Choir

Monday, December 5

9:00 AM Preschool 2, 4, 4 & 5
12:30 PM Grace Circle
6:30 PM Boy Scout Troop 153

Tuesday, December 6

9:00 AM Preschool 2, 3, 4 & 5
9:00 AM Sewing Circle
6:30 PM Spirituality Team Meeting
7:00 PM Exultation!

Wednesday, December 7

9:00 AM Preschool 2, 4, 4 & 5
12:30 PM Staff Meeting
5:00 PM Messenger Choir
5:15 PM PrimeTime Dinner-Pot Luck
5:30 PM 2 Yr. Old Class/Cherub Choir
6:00 PM Confirmation Fellowship
6:00 PM Revelation Ringers
6:15 PM Joyful Sound Choir
6:30 PM Confirmation Service Event
7:00 PM Midweek Advent Service
7:30 PM Lessons & Carols
7:40 PM Men's Basketball
8:30 PM Chancel Choir

Thursday, December 8

9:00 AM Preschool 2, 3, 4 & 5
6:30 PM Sycamore Dist. Round Table
7:00 PM Exultation!

Friday, December 9

9:00 AM Preschool 4, 4 & 5

Saturday, December 10

8:30 AM Men's Ministry
8:30 AM Spirituality Team—Baskets

9:00 AM Band
9:00 AM Decoration Team
9:00 AM Parent's Day Out Fundraiser
5:00 PM Worship
6:00 PM Fair Trade

Sunday, December 11

8:30 AM Traditional Worship
9:30 AM Fair Trade
9:45 AM Education Hour
10:45 AM Contemporary Worship
10:45 AM Christmas Family Sharing Sorting
2:00 PM Patrol Leader Conference
5:00 PM Youthful Spirit
6:30 PM Graceful Ringers/H.S. Choir

Monday, December 12

9:00 AM Preschool 2, 4, 4 & 5
6:30 PM Boy Scout Troop 153
7:00 PM Property & Grounds Mtg.
7:15 PM Social Ministry Team

Tuesday, December 13

9:00 AM Preschool 2, 3, 4 & 5
12:00 PM Senior Luncheon
5:00 AM Girl Scout Troop 1306 Meeting
6:30 PM Faith Circle Christmas Party
7:15 PM Stewardship Committee Mtg.

Wednesday, December 14

9:00 AM Preschool 2, 4, 4 & 5
9:00 AM MOPS
12:30 PM Staff Meeting
5:00 PM Messenger Choir
5:15 PM PrimeTime Dinner-Hot Dogs
5:30 PM 2 Yr. Old Class/Cherub Choir
6:00 PM Confirmation Fellowship
6:00 PM Revelation Ringers
6:15 PM Joyful Sound Choir
6:30 PM Confirmation Small Groups
7:00 PM Midweek Advent Service
7:30 PM Lessons & Carols
7:40 PM Men's Basketball

Thursday, December 15

9:00 AM Preschool 2, 3, 4 & 5
5:45 PM Adult Education Committee
7:00 PM Council

GRACE STAFF & COUNCIL

Senior Pastor

Rev. Kenneth D. Gibson
kgibson@gracewoodstock.org
Office Phone: 815-338-0554
Home Phone: 815-527-7215

Associate Pastor

Director of Senior High Ministries
Rev. Amanda Bergstrom
Cell Phone: 630-664-9016
abergstrom@gracewoodstock.org

Director of Communications

Lynn Nattress
lnattress@gracewoodstock.org

Director of Music Ministries

Ron Fredriksen
rfredriksen@gracewoodstock.org

Parish Musicians

Terry Aavang, Jan Burns, Dale Carlson,
Larry Lagerhausen, Tammy Baier

Director of Preschool Ministry

Chris Learman
clearman@gracewoodstock.org

Preschool Staff

Tammy Baier, Amy Flores, Nancy Kurcab,
Nancy Mojica, Kristy Nellesen

Director of Educational Ministries

Office Assistant

Carrie Fiorina
cfiorina@gracewoodstock.org

Director of Senior Ministries

Shirley Busse

Secretary

Denise Klabunde
dkiabunde@gracewoodstock.org

Wedding Coordinator/Leader

Dee Brown

Building Supervisor/Ken Zank
Custodian/Kim Brink

Officers & Council

Mary Beth Martin-Bellavia; Cindy Meyers;
Claude Hutchens; Peter Paulson;
Cynthia DeBerg; Matt Simonton; Nan Goerlitz;
Elizabeth Karagianis; Joe Pienschke;
Adele Petersen; Chuck Varys
council@gracewoodstock.org