

DECEMBER 28, 2011—JANUARY 10, 2012 • VOLUME 10, NO. 26

**Favorite Things at Christmas Time.....by Pastor Ken Gibson**

Do you have a number of favorite things that you need to have in order for the Christmas Holiday to somehow be made complete? Most people do I think, and the lists are varied but some things seem to perhaps be almost universal. For example, many people I talk with are always wishing for a white Christmas. One person recently shared with me; “Even if it is just a little bit, that will be ok, it can go back to being green all the way up to spring and then really warm up, but give me a little snow for Christmas Eve. I just like snow on Christmas Eve.” Well, as it looks by the forecast as I write this article, a white Christmas is not looking too promising.

Still others insist on a certain meal to make the Holiday complete. How many of you have a special meal that seems to need to be consumed in order for the Christmas Spirit to really take hold? In my home, when I was growing up, it was always turkey for Thanksgiving and ham for Christmas, and even though some years those items were small, that was never altered, as somehow dad always found a way to purchase a turkey and a ham. Now, in my adult home, Jodi is not that big on ham, (even though she once was the Stephenson County Pork Queen her senior year in high school), this year we are not having ham, I think I can adjust, especially when I think of so many who will be hungry again this Holiday. I will most certainly be thankful for whatever we have and praise God for such.

In thinking of what would be my “most favorite, got to have it or Christmas just won’t be good item”, it would have to be a **full church**. Now I am not just saying that because I am a Pastor. I have always loved a full church on Christmas Eve. Often times I would attend midnight mass, as a kid growing up and I was always amazed at how full and vibrant the church could be at such a late hour. I loved the songs we all sang together and the joyfulness of it all. Yes, a full church is for me a “must have” in order to acclaim that I have had a wonderful Christmas. Will we have such this year? As I write this it is two days before Christmas Eve, (could that be called the eve of the eve of Christmas Eve?), in any event, I do so hope that others find a full church full of friends and family and voices singing out in great Joy important for their Christmas to be made complete. After all, this birth is the start of the Church on earth, is it not? So, is it not essential to be in Church on such a night? For me it is, I hope it is for all of you.

Please know how much Jodi and I appreciate the love many have shared with us at this time of year through a kind word, a card or in some cases even gifts, we are truly blessed by your love. I am also thankful for the ministries we have accomplished in the past year and for what I am sure will be even more mission mindedness in the year ahead. Merry Christmas everyone! Emanuel God is with us! For this greatest of all gifts we sing together in praise like did the heavenly Choir that first announced this good news. Gloria in Excelsis Deo!

**New Member Orientation Breakfast**—If you are interested, or know of anyone that is interested in membership here at Grace, we will be hosting a new member orientation breakfast on **Jan. 7, 2012** at 10:00 a.m. Please sign-up in the Activity Binder at the Information Center, or contact the church office for more information.

## WORSHIP TODAY

**Sunday, January 1, 2012**

### **Name of Jesus**

**INTRODUCTION Name of Jesus:** By Jewish law, every baby boy was circumcised and named on the eighth day of life, so on the eighth day of Christmas the church celebrates this event in Jesus' life. The keeping of the covenant as well as Jesus' name are signs of God's salvation given to us through him.

#### READINGS:

Numbers 6:22-27

Psalms 8

Galatians 4:4-7

Luke 2:15-21

**Sunday, January 8, 2012**

### **Epiphany of Our Lord**

**INTRODUCTION:** Epiphany means "manifestation." On this day we celebrate the revelation of Christ to the Gentiles—that is, to all nations. Some Christian traditions celebrate three great epiphanies on this day: the magi's adoration of the Christ child, Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River, and his first miracle, in which he changes water into wine. The word and sacraments are for us the great epiphany of God's grace and mercy. We go forth to witness to the light that shines brightly in our midst.

#### READINGS:

Isaiah 60:1-6

Psalms 72:1-7, 10-14

Ephesians 3:1-12

Matthew 2:1-12

**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](mailto: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)

**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, Edna Clark, Evelyn Carlsen (mother of Cathy Meyer), Joe Cherella (friend of Martha & Bill Fleck), Steve Clark (son of Edna Clark), Mark Conerty (father of Jordan & Paige Conerty), 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), Lillian French, Matt Gerloff (grandson of Bob Gerloff), Mary Guyett (sister of Doris Sunday), Darrin Hansing (nephew of Ken & Tammy Hansing), Patrice Hoover, August Hutchens, Claude Hutchens Sr. (father of Claude Hutchens), Theo Hutchens, Dwight Jensen, Chris John (friend of Bill & Lynn Nattress), Paul Judson, Betty Karsten (sister of Vern Sarbaugh), Pastor Laura Koppenhoefer (N.I.S.), Edie Marvin (niece of Ken & Gladys Renner), Emil "Corky" Matula (friend of Lois Wiecek) Kathy Nordin, Gloria Ogle, Alice Pate, Georgia Petersdorf (sister-in-law of Ken & Gladys Renner), Richard Petersen, 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), Stephanie Sarto (friend of Paul Lockwood), Lauren Schindler (daughter of Pastor Ken and Jodi Gibson), Gladys Smart (mother of Deborrah Evanoff), Margaret Stawicki (mother of Nan Goerlitz), Ken Swan, 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

**Sorrows:** Betty Ann Belden, Joe Blanco, Nancy Wolters (sister of Jan Fredriksen)

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](mailto: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.

## **What Child is This.....by Pastor Amanda Bergstrom**

What child is this whose wondrous birth we proclaim, look forward to each year, and just celebrated? What child is this whose very birth changed reality, altered paths, challenged abusive powers, and brought peace to earth? Well, we know, of course, this child is Jesus, the babe, the son of Mary; and this remarkable child is certainly worth the celebration, the interruption of routines, the preparations, and the festivity.

And so, before this excitement fades, I invite you to breathe deep into the fresh, renewing air of Christmastime. May the songs and carols we love to hear and sing continue to guide us, and lead us into the new year. Because this wonderful newborn child continues to be the light that shines in the darkness this winter, keeps on teaching us how to live out our lives, and ever calls us forth into a new year in a world marked by Christ's presence.

God's peace be with you as we begin to wonder how Jesus might be calling to us in this new year. May the wonder, awe, and excitement of Christmas renew us for the exciting possibilities of sharing God's grace in a world so graced by the presence of this child Jesus.



**Christmas Family Sharing—Thank You**—Thank you for an amazing response for our Christmas Family Sharing ministry this year. Over 70 families or individuals from our congregation, provided presents and meal gift cards for people in need. We were able to provide presents for 50 individuals from the Family Health Partnership Clinic along with Christmas dinner gift cards for each of the 10 families.

The response to the Bethel Christmas Store was overwhelming. Initially, we had assured Bethel that we would provide 80 gifts for the Store. When everything was collected, we were able to send at least 180 gifts for the Store! We also had eight people volunteer their time to help in the Store. Wow!

**LSSI Update**—At our last Church Council meeting, we had an extended discussion of the results of conversations with the property owners to the east of our property and LSSI. It did not appear likely that we would be able to easily and cost effectively obtain an easement through that property in order to meet the City's water distribution (i.e., looping) requirement. Also, without a detailed plan to meet that requirement, LSSI could not give any reasonable assurances of obtaining a funding extension for this particular project. While the Church Council remains supportive of an affordable senior housing ministry, we voted to not pursue further options related to this project at this time. A letter has been sent to LSSI indicating our decision to halt further action on the sale of our property, but we did express a desire to partner with LSSI in the future should an appropriate project, as agreed upon by the congregation, become available. Please feel free to discuss this further with any Council member.

**Transportation Assistance Needed**—We have a request from a disabled person who lives in the Maple Tree Apartments for a ride to and from Church on Sunday Mornings. This person is on oxygen but does seem to be able to get about for such excursions. If anyone is interested in perhaps offering a ride to church for this person please see Pastor Ken and he will be able to share more information.



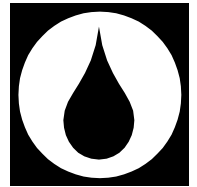
**Were You Baptized at Grace in 2011?** - If so, we would like to get your photo for a Baptism Photo Wall. Please forward to Lynn Nattress at [lnattress@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:lnattress@gracewoodstock.org), or drop off a copy in the church office.



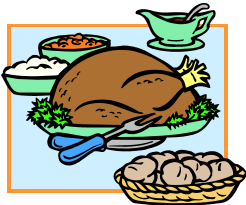
**Bread For The Day Daily Bible Readings and Prayers for 2012**—Pastor Amanda and Pastor Ken have decided to use the same daily scripture devotional for all of 2012, the title of which is above. The resource is put out by our ELCA publisher Augsburg Fortress and it is very widely used by clergy and laity across the Church. Our invitation is for as many who would like to do so, to join us in using this devotional tool in the New Year. If you would like to do so please sign-up in the binder, at the Information Center, under the 2012 devotional tab and we will be placing an order at the end of the year. The cost will be ten dollars for each devotional book you may need, this includes shipping costs. (If you need assistance with this fee please contact either Pastor Ken or Pastor Amanda and we will work something out.)

We are excited to think about what God might have in store for us as a Church community when we all are in the same scriptures daily.

**Blood Drive Results**—Heartland Blood Centers thanks the church for coordinating a fall blood drive. Our goal for the drive was to collect 25 donations, which we were able to do with only 3 deferrals. Our support helps Heartland Blood Centers to provide hospitals in our area with a safe and adequate supply of blood and blood products. Many patients will benefit from the generosity of our donors.



**Blood Drive Coordinator Needed**—We send a special thank you to Pam (Roberts) Richards for serving as our Blood Drive Coordinator. Your help in supporting this ministry has been much appreciated! As we begin the new year, we are now in need of a new person to coordinate this wonderful ministry at Grace. Please prayerfully consider this opportunity and contact Pastor Ken if you are interested.



**Turkey Dinner**—The High School Youth will be offering a Turkey Dinner with all the trimmings on Sunday, **January 15th** in order to raise funds for their New Orleans Youth Gathering. They are currently selling tickets in the narthex on Sundays between services. The cost is \$10/adult; \$5/child up age 11; and free for children under 3. Won't you please join us for some fantastic fellowship and fabulous food??



**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 watch the Activity Board for a sign-up sheet or contact the church office for more information. Many arrangements are being made to make this a very successful stop and a magical musical evening here at Grace.

**Newsletter Deadline** —All *Grace for Today* articles for the January 11th issue should be sent to Lynn Nattress at [lnattress@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:lnattress@gracewoodstock.org) or to the church office by noon on Thursday, January 5th.

## **Life Line Screening Preventive Health Events— Have You Taken Control of Your Health Today?**

Life Line Screening will be at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church on Tuesday, **February 14, 2012** offering five safe, painless, non-invasive preventive health screenings that are typically not part of a routine physical.

### **Identifying Your Risk = Disease Prevention**

Life Line Screening will perform screenings for:

- 1) carotid artery blockage (stroke)
- 2) atrial fibrillation
- 3) abdominal aortic aneurysm
- 4) peripheral arterial disease
- 5) osteoporosis (bone loss)

These screenings are recommended for anyone 50 and older, or 40 and over with cardiovascular risk factors. They are non-invasive, painless, and take 60-90 minutes to complete. The results, which are mailed directly to you, will help you and your doctor protect your health. Stroke, Vascular and Heart Rhythm Package range from \$129.00 to \$159.00.

This event is also being sponsored by Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital.

To be more proactive about your health and live longer for yourself, your family, and your community. Pre-register in the Activity Binder at the Information Center, and receive \$10 off of the package price. You may also call to register at 1-888-653-6441 or visit [www.lifelinescreening.com/community-partners](http://www.lifelinescreening.com/community-partners).

There is no time like the present to take action!

**Children's Sermon Presenters Needed—** If you are interested in assisting with this mission we would love to have your help in explaining Gods word in a way that is easier for our children to understand. Each presenter gives a short sermon at both the early and late service on their assigned Sunday. The current rotation has each person on the rotation presenting their sermon about every 6 weeks. Please contact Gretchen Hutchens @ 815-341-7544 or [cghutchens@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cghutchens@sbcglobal.net) for further information.

**Bulletin & Presence Light Sponsors 2012—**Bulletin and presence light sponsor sheets are available in the green binder at the Information Center for 2012. There are sponsors needed for the remainder of 2011 as well. Prior to your sponsoring, a form will be sent to you requesting information and your donation of \$20 for the bulletins and \$10 for the presence light.

**Music4Martin 2012 — 10th Anniv!**  
SAVE THE DATE— Enjoy an afternoon of performances to celebrate the messages of the great Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on Sunday **Jan. 29**.

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 31

9:00 AM Band  
5:00 PM Worship

### Sunday, January 1

8:30 AM Traditional Worship  
10:45 AM Contemporary Worship

### Monday, January 2

New Year's Day Observed/Church Office Closed  
No Preschool/Christmas Break  
4:00 PM Boy Scouts

### Tuesday, January 3

No Preschool/Christmas Break  
6:30 PM Evangelism Committee Meeting  
6:30 PM Spirituality Team Meeting

### Wednesday, January 4

No Preschool/Christmas Break  
7:00 PM Chancel Choir  
7:15 PM Men's Basketball

### Thursday, January 5

9:00 AM Preschool 2, 3, 4 & 5  
7:00 PM Worship & Music Comm. Mtg.

### Friday, January 6

9:00 AM Preschool 4, 4 & 5

### Saturday, January 7

9:00 AM Band  
10:00 AM New Member Orientation  
5:00 PM Worship  
6:00 PM Fair Trade Coffee

### Sunday, January 8

8:30 AM Traditional Worship  
9:30 AM Fair Trade  
9:45 AM Education Hour  
10:45 AM Contemporary Worship  
5:00 PM Youthful Spirit  
6:30 PM Graceful Ringers  
6:30 PM High School Choir

### Monday, January 9

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

### Tuesday, January 10

9:00 AM Preschool 2, 3, 4 & 5  
7:15 PM Stewardship Committee Mtg.

### Wednesday, January 11

9:00 AM Preschool 2, 4, 4 & 5  
9:30 AM MOPS  
12:30 PM Staff Meeting  
5:00 PM Messenger Choir  
5:15 PM PrimeTime Dinner-Popeye's  
5:30 PM 2 Yr. Old Class/Cherub Choir  
6:00 PM Conf. Fellowship/Rev. Ringers  
6:15 PM Joyful Sound Choir  
6:30 PM Confirmation Small Groups  
7:00 PM Chancel Choir  
7:15 PM Men's Basketball

### Thursday, January 12

9:00 AM Preschool 2, 3, 4 & 5  
7:00 PM Exultation

### Friday, January 13

9:00 AM Preschool 4, 4 & 5  
11:30 AM Adoration

### Saturday, January 14

9:00 AM Band  
1:00 PM Turkey Dinner Prep—H.S. Youth  
5:00 PM Worship

### Sunday, January 15

8:30 AM Traditional Worship  
9:45 AM Education Hour  
10:45 AM Contemporary Worship  
1:00 PM Music4Martin Rehearsal  
1:30 PM Turkey Dinner/Fundraiser High School Youth  
3:30 PM Turkey Dinner/Fundraiser High School Youth  
5:00 PM Youthful Spirit  
6:30 PM Graceful Ringers  
6:30 PM High School Choir

## GRACE STAFF & COUNCIL

### Senior Pastor

Rev. Kenneth D. Gibson  
[kgibson@gracewoodstock.org](mailto: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](mailto:abergstrom@gracewoodstock.org)

### Director of Communications

Lynn Nattress  
[lnattress@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:lnattress@gracewoodstock.org)

### Director of Music Ministries

Ron Fredriksen  
[rfredriksen@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:rfredriksen@gracewoodstock.org)

### Parish Musicians

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

### Director of Preschool Ministry

Chris Learman  
[clearman@gracewoodstock.org](mailto: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](mailto:cfiorina@gracewoodstock.org)

### Director of Senior Ministries

Shirley Busse

### Secretary

Denise Klabunde  
[dkiabunde@gracewoodstock.org](mailto: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](mailto:council@gracewoodstock.org)