

JANUARY, 2018 • VOLUME 17, NO. 1

THE “WAIT” IS MADE COMPLETE.....by Pastor Ken Gibson

Well as I mentioned in my last Grace for Today article, the season of waiting for a spectacular event, ADVENT, was upon us. I shared in that article that I would be waiting with excitement for a special birth much like we all do in Advent. But in my case, I was awaiting the birth of my second grandson. Well the waiting is over! On Sunday, December 10 at around 3:30 in the morning, Odin Ryan Schindler came into the world a healthy happy 9.5 pound baby boy. All are doing well, including older brother Lukas who is completely thrilled at the reality of being a big brother. The season of Advent this past year will always be special one in my life and for many reasons.

The reality of a birth bringing forth good news and heralding an end to waiting is truly what Advent is, and was always about. So now the celebration comes like the heavenly choir of angels announced some 2,000 plus years ago; “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!” Yes! I do feel like singing of the great news that has come to us this season and it is doubly joyous for me indeed.

On another front, many recall that a group of us from Grace were in Germany in November to tour and visit the Luther sites as the 500th Anniversary year began October 31st 2017. There was special joy for us to be in Germany at that time of year, Advent, as it is the time of year when Germany comes alive with Christkindlesmarkt all over the country. Every place we visited shared a Christmas market. They were everywhere and I marveled at the enthusiasm with which each place celebrated this time of year. It was cold and sometimes snowing, and yet these markets are all outside and they were for the most part PACKED! It was a great way to be together, to share together, have conversations with one another all outside in the midst of weather that often we may think of being alone with a good book and a warm nook all alone. Not all that bad of an idea either, but these open air places bided you to them and they wooed us all into being in community. All of this reminded me of how Christ woos us into relationship with one another. Jesus came that we might know the depth of God’s love for the entire world. As the Hymn; Hark The Herald Angels Sing (ELW 270) states it;” God and Sinners reconciled.”

Yes! Yes! Yes! WE are reconciled to God in Christ and that was one of Luther’s greatest gifts to us in bringing us to the understanding that we are reconciled to God thru Christ. Now knowing all this can we not help but Sing? Can we or do we dare not be in joy filled relationships with our sisters in brothers, those we know and those we do not know?

In so many ways Advent with a capital A has ended there will be no other. Sure, we will celebrate advent seasons in our church year but the Advent capital A wait has been fulfilled. Christ has come! So as we sing in ELW 288 “GOOD CHRISTIAN FRIENDS REJOICE! Amen!

ALTAR GUILD – We are in need of members to join our Altar Guild. Being a part of the Altar Guild you would help set the altar for worship services. This includes some of the following: communion stations, candles and special services such as funerals, weddings and baptisms. You would work with a group and your group would be signed up for approximately 3 months per year. If you can help with this ministry or have any further questions please give Denise Klabunde, in the office, or call; 815-338-0554.

SENIOR LUNCHEON- January 23 : Cheese & Crackers, Pumpkin Chili with toppings, Cheddar Corn Bread, and Brookies for dessert . . . no, I can't tell you what they are but you are going to love the! Cost is still \$5, so bring a friend Sign up in the Activity Binder by January 21. Questions, call Shirley Busse at 815-338-9063

BULLETIN & PRESENCE LIGHT SPONSORS- 2018 Bulletin & Presence Light sponsor sheets are available in the green binder at the Welcome Center. A month prior to your sponsoring, a form will be sent to you requesting information and a donation of \$20 for the Bulletins & \$10 for the Presence Light. Thank you for helping us fund the weekly bulletins and presence lights.

CALLING ALL COOKS!- Lenten Soup lunches begin **February 14**, won't you be a valentine and sign up today to make some soup? For more information or to sign up, see the Activity Binder or call Shirley Busse at 815-338-9063

THE ZIMBELSTERN- WHAT IS IT?- This delightful gift that combines the sound of bells with the movement of a star is now perched on the ledge surrounding our organ pipes. If you were at the Christmas Eve 4:30 & 11 pm services you heard the tiny bells that carry over the sound of the organ and saw the lovely bronze twirling star. Zimbelstern means cymbal-star, originating in German in the 18th century. Originally the bells were attached to the star and struck by stationary clappers. These cast tuned bells are unique in that they blend with any harmony played on the organ. The pitches for the five individual bells were chosen to not produce a particular "key" (tonal center) or to clash with each other. They are high enough in range to be heard over whatever the organ is playing. Special strikers create a brighter sound than handbells so the sound is more distinct. The bells are rung in a random sequence of sixteen notes over the five bells which does not sound repetitive. The speed and volume of the bells can also be adjusted to fit the music being played. We thank this generous donor and look forward to the many occasions on which we will be uplifted by this sight and sound.

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 Elizabeth Eaton, churchwide staff & their families, Bishop Jeff Clements, synod staff & their families, those serving in military conflicts, Arusha Town Lutheran Parish in Tanzania (our companion parish), Scott Bunch serving in the military, Chaplain Major Darrell Kyle deployed with the U.S. Air Force.

Woodstock: Pr. Ken Gibson & his family; Pr. Amanda Bergstrom & her family; Grace Staff; Grace Council

Health Concerns: Catherine Aavang-Roush and her infant son, Leo, Marge Birk, Lois Bloese, John Bloese, Ray Bock (husband of Sharon Bock), Mary Sue Boerner (friend of Paul Lockwood & Diane Baker-Lockwood), Sheila Boggess (friend of Kathy Stone), Frank Bunch, Dale Carlson, Allison Clark (niece of Martha & Bill Fleck), Jasper Schinkoeth (grandson of Deb & Joe Evanoff), Nancy Davis, Patrice Dunn, Verna Eslick, Russ Freeman, Robert Giron (brother of Patty Kozlow), Becca Guenther (niece of Gretchen & Claude Hutchens), Tamasa Gutierrez (mother of Patty Kozlow), Wallace Halvorson (father of Shelley Tucker), Jerry Johnson, the Kamps family, Diana King, Nancy Knieja (friend of Martha Fleck), Keith Kulpinski (friend of Spanbauers & Thurows), Ken Lindenmier (brother-in-law of Diane Baker-Lockwood), John Mahoney, Renee Merklin (friend of Rachel Bratanick), Tammy Millman (daughter of Karen Millman), Kem Moran (friend of Barb Aavang), Carl Neubaum (son of Donna Neubaum), Carol O'Brien (sister of Bill Larsen), Gloria Ogle, John Oliver (friend of Ron & Mary Koehn), Sue Olsen, Arne Olson, Vicki Pilgard, Carol Raffel, Carol Rank, Shawn Rank (son of Bert & Carol Rank), Johnny Rankin (friend of Joe Evanoff), Sheila Readel, Rene Rebman (uncle of Ron & Mary Koehn), Jean Reed (mother of Mary Hoyt), Joan Russell (mother of Sheri Conover), Stanley Russell (father of Sheri Conover), Colton Sciluffo (infant son of a friend of Joy Oberman), Dick Schroeder, Ellen Schulz (daughter-in-law of Diane Schulz), Bill Seger, Eleanor Setser, John Sorensen, Elsie Stoddard, Ginny Stroh (mother of Fay Wilson), Doris Sunday, Samuel Sweeney (nephew of Melissa McMahan), Ellie Mae Thompson (great niece of Gladys & Ken Renner), Josh Tillman, Brian Tobin (grandson of Enn Teetsov), Bev Visconti, Jim & Patti Waters (parents of Chris Ethridge), Kaitlyn Wietermann, Bud Winter, Ruth Zirves

Sorrow: Pat Auvenshine (mother of Kim McLaughlin)

Joy: Baptism of Braxton Kai Ruiz (son of Juan Ruiz & Kylie Baxter)

If you wish to add a prayer request for the 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.

RISING STAR, OVERWHELMED WITH JOY.....by Pastor Amanda

“When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy.” -Matthew 2:10

At the beginning of the new calendar year ahead, the church year observes Epiphany each January 6th, the manifestation of Christ. At Grace, we will begin 2018 by gathering for worship on January 6 & 7, and we'll celebrate Epiphany, the rising star that led the magi to see where the child was, to kneel down and pay homage to Christ. I hope to see you in worship to share in receiving a star gift, and we'll also have a Blessing for a Home that you can take with you to participate in an Epiphany tradition at home.

As the wonders of Christmas gatherings calm a bit, as winter break nears an end, as the New Year anticipates hopeful resolutions or even inevitable disappointments, and as the depths or dreariness of winter sets in- the promise of the Christ child continues to illumine God's world and our lives. Jesus was not only born away in a manger, but a rising star led God's people to come and adore him, to bring an authentic and overwhelming source of joy to the world.

I hope and pray that the life and joy of Christ will be revealed to you in this season. Thank you for being a part of God's faithful people who gather at Grace to worship Christ and for letting your light so shine in the world as you share God's grace.

CHRISTMAS FAMILY SHARING- A huge thank you for your generous support of the Christmas Family Sharing ministry this year. With your help we donated, seven boxes of food, two boxes of medications and other supplies, and \$280 in gift cards to the Family Health Partnership Clinic. We donated three boxes of supplies, lots of laundry baskets, and \$650 for weighted blankets to Turning Point shelter program. And, we donated (there might be a song in here somewhere) 17 chicks, 9 pigs, 6 hives of honeybees, 6 water filters, 5 roosters, 5 goats, 5 sets of school supplies, 4 meals for refugee families, 4 school fees and uniforms, 3 Bibles, 3 feeding 50 at a soup kitchen, 3 microloans for a woman, and 1 latrine to ELCA Good Gifts. Thank you!

MAKE TIME FOR PRIME TIME- Looking for a weeknight to eat together with your family? Wednesday nights are the prime time to plan such a meal. Each Wednesday, Grace offers a program called “PrimeTime.” PrimeTime is an evening of many events: many of the children's choirs meet as well as the Chancel, chimes and handbell choirs; a variety of meals are planned and served each week; confirmation is held for 7th and 8th graders. Overall, it is a great chance to eat and fellowship with other members and friends of the church. In years past, families have brought games to play together, and friends have gotten together to play cards following the meal. Luther Hall is open for children (and adults) wanting to “let off some steam,” both before and after dinner! PrimeTime will take a break over Winter Break but will resume **January 10th**.

BREAD FOR THE DAY 2018- Bread for the day is a daily-use devotional resource filled with rich treasures; such as a brief scripture reading, a prayer and hymn for each day and more. The devotions begin **January 1, 2018**. If you are interested in having a copy of the devotional book they available for purchase in the office for \$8.00.

ADULT BUS TRIP- Saturday, March 10, 8:15 – 6:15 “A Look at Aurora, the second largest city in IL. We will begin our day with a narrated driving tour of the city, then enjoy a guided tour of Fermilab, before lunching at 2 Brothers Roundhouse, and conclude our day with “Cabaret” at the Paramount Theatre. Cost is only \$75 +lunch. For more information or to sign up, please see the Activity Binder. Questions, call Shirley Busse at 815-338-9063

WHY CHRISTIAN?- Why are you a Christian? Over the past couple years, Nadia Bolz-Weber and Rachel Held Evans have hosted a conference called “Why Christian,” that has been a ‘one-of-a-kind gathering of pastors, practitioners, artists, dreamers, and doubters around one question: Why Christian?’ You are invited to gather at Grace to watch videos and share conversation as we hear speakers respond to that question from the 2015 Conference. Each speaker tells their own story, you may or may not resonate with their life experiences, and in hearing other people's witness, the Holy Spirit may stir up in you your own wrestling with this question of faith- Why Christian? We'll meet on seven Tuesday evenings in February and March from 6:30-8:00 P.M. (**February 6 – March 20**). It's ok if you cannot make it to each week, but please sign up on the Activity Board if you plan to attend so we can prepare a space to gather. Childcare will be provided; please note age(s) of children on the sign-up sheet as well. Contact Pastor Amanda with questions. Hope to see you there.

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE-The deadline for the February newsletter is January 15. Send articles to Tammy Baier at tbaier@gracewoodstock.org, or the church office. Questions: Call the office at 815-338-0554.

PREPARE THE WAY

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Committed— \$497,579.06
Received— \$513,570.45
Goal— \$780,430.00

BLOOD DRIVE- Please help our community by sharing the blessing of health by donating blood at Grace on **January 14th**. You can make an appointment at ht.heartlandbc.org or call/text Gretchen Hutchens at 815-341-7544.

SAVE THE DATE-

Committee Night- JAN 2
DAP- JAN 4
Youth Gathering Meeting- JAN 7
Blood Drive- JAN 14
Faith Circle- JAN 15
DAP- JAN 18
Council- JAN 18
Fair Trade- JAN 20/21
Blood Pressure Checks- JAN 21
Senior Lunch- JAN 23

PEOPLE IN NEED FORUM- Anyone who is interested in helping those in need is encouraged to attend this forum. Topics will include: homelessness, senior population, veterans, budgeting, financial resources, and more. The event is **Saturday, January 27, 2018, 8:00a.m. - 12:30p.m.** Luecht Conference Center McHenry County College. Register today at www.mchenry.edu/peopleinneed. For more information contact: Bev Thomas at bthomas@mchenry.edu

FAITHBRIDGE MLK, JR. PRAYER BREAKFAST- The 8th annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Interfaith Prayer Breakfast will be held on **January 15** from 7:30 to 9:30 A.M. This event will be held at D'Andrea Banquets, 4419 US Rt #14, Crystal Lake. This year's keynote speaker is Rev. Doctor Zina Jacque, Pastor, Community Church of Barrington. Tickets are available at www.FaithBridgeInterfaith.org (Adults: \$20, Students: \$10)

Visit the Grace website for the most up-to-date information for all that is happening at Grace!

gracewoodstock.org

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