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Grace Lutheran Church & School

460 75th Ave. NE

Fridley, MN 55432

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Home Page: www.CLCGraceLutheranChurch.org

Member: *CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFSSION*

Pastor: John Hein (Cell 612-408-1635)

Phone: 763-784-8784

Principal: Ryan Libby (Ph. 763-784-6340)

Grades: Kindergarten- 8th

Church Year: Advent 3

Date: December 17, 2006

> *THE ORDER OF WORSHIP* >

Worship Preparation:..... *Psalm 130, TLH p. 153*

Hymn:..... *TLH 56: Jesus Came, the Heavens Adoring*

Liturgy:..... *TLH, p. 5 ff. (Laminated Sheet in Pew Also Available)*

Note: Today we will sing the introit and have the Advent candle lighting in place of the liturgy from pages 6 - 9.

Introit: *Tune of TLH 58: O Lord, How Shall I Meet Thee*

Rejoice, rejoice, ye Christians, Again I say: Rejoice!

Lead lives of moderation, The Savior is at hand;

Be full of care for nothing, Address the Lord in prayer.

He leads us out of prison, Brings Jacob safely there.

Advent Candle Lighting:..... *The Shepherd Candle*

We light this candle as a symbol of joy. This we experience as Christ comes into our hearts. May the joyful promise of Your presence, O God, make us rejoice in our hope of salvation, just as it did for the shepherds that first Christmas night!

O come, O come, Emmanuel!

Response:..... *TLH 62, st. 3: Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel*

Oh, come, Thou Dayspring from on high,
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

First Reading:..... Zephaniah 3:14-17

Rejoice, dear Christians, for the Lord will be in our midst.

Gradual:

P: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!

C: Shout, daughter of Jerusalem!

P: See, your King comes to you,

C: Righteous and having salvation.

P: Alleluia, Alleluia. I will send My messenger ahead of You,

C: Who will prepare Your way before You. Alleluia.

Choir:..... Come, O Long-Expected Jesus

Second Reading:..... Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice, dear Christians, patiently waiting on the Lord.

Confession of Faith:..... Apostolic Creed, TLH p. 12

Hymn:..... TLH 73: Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

Sermon:..... Matthew 1:18-25

(18) Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. (19) Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. (20) But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. (21) "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." (22) So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: (23) "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." (24) Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, (25) and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS. (NKJVTM)

Angels We Have Heard on High:

“The Angel Appears to Joseph”

Offertory:..... *TLH p. 12 f.*

Hymn:..... *TLH 98: Of the Father’s Love Begotten*

Offering, Prayers, Benediction:..... *TLH p. 14*

Hymn:..... *TLH 90, st. 1,4: Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising*

Silent Prayer:

> *TODAY AT GRACE* >

Organist: Sue Nelson

Elder: Michael Dick

Ushers: Bill Rust; Don Dahlin; Dan Degnan, Jr.; Michael Englehorn; Bob Maki; Roger Ochsner; Joel Stifter

Counting Team 4: Paul Lentz; Al Rosendahl; Dave Rust; Lynn Sandhoefner; Jeff Radichel

Hospitality Team 5: Mark & Trudy Wales; Al Rosendahl; Karen Auel

Church Cleaners: Oman

School: Perdue

> *NEXT WEEK AT GRACE* >

Ushers: Bill Rust; Don Dahlin; Dan Degnan, Jr.; Michael Englehorn; Bob Maki; Roger Ochsner; Joel Stifter

Counting Team 5: Mike Dick; Brad Kitzman; Ed Lentz; Roger Ochsner

Hospitality Team 6: Pat & Dawn Paplow; Mike & Pat Dick; Frank & Ann Radichel

Church Cleaners: Hein

> *OUR SCHEDULE* >

Today: 9:00 am – Sunday School and Bible Class

10:00 am – Worship Service (Advent 3)

11:00 am – Hospitality; Christmas Tree Decorating

12:00 pm – Council Meeting

3:00 pm – Caroling Outing

Wed., Dec. 20: NO CATECHISM THIS WEEK (Resume Jan. 10)

6:00 pm – Advent Soup Supper

7:00 pm – Candlelight Worship Service

Fri., Dec. 22: 12:00 pm – School Christmas Party

Christian Day School Begins Christmas Break

Sun., Dec. 24: 8:30 am – Choir Practice

9:00 am – Christmas Eve Rehearsal (No Bible Class)

10:00 am – Worship Service (Advent 4)

11:00 am – Hospitality

6:00 pm – Christmas Eve Service

Mon., Dec. 25: 10:00 am – Christmas Day Service

Sun., Dec. 31: 10:00 am – Worship Service (No S.S. or Bible Class)

Sun., Jan. 7: 9:00 am – Sunday School and Bible Class Resume

10:00 am – Worship Service (Epiphany 1)

Mon., Jan. 8: Christian Day School Resumes

CHRISTMAS WITHOUT CHRIST:

When Mary and Joseph came to Bethlehem there was no room for them in the inn so Jesus was born in a stable and laid in a manger. In a small town in West Virginia this Christmas there is no room in the stable. “The communities holiday display has a manger with shepherds, a guiding star, camels and a palm tree, but no baby Jesus, Mary or Joseph” (CT- December 3, 2006) The mayor of the town says Jesus was omitted for purely technical reasons. Too difficult to “put a lightup representation of a baby in a small manger scene ...” he says. The park superintendent is more honest. The concern is “about the separation of church and state,” is his explanation. In other words the town leaders have bowed to the politically correct crowd! [Because of protest, they returned Jesus, but not Mary and Joseph- CT-12/5]

There is something suggestive about the empty manger. Christmas parties, Christmas sales, Christmas presents, Christmas balls, Christmas cookies, Christmas pageants, Christmas caroling, Christmas worship all find there reason because of the birth of Christ. Have you ever heard of a Christmas -you name it- in the middle of summer? But if CHRIST is not the center of our CHRISTmas observation, yes the center of our worship but is in stead simply an excuse for celebrating who knows what, and if Christ finds no dwelling in the heart, how is that different from a politically correct manger scene without Christ?

Many Christians of all stripes lament the dumbing- down of the Christmas season to the lowest

common denominator. A Christ-less manger display is indicative of a mindset that recognizes Christmas as nothing more than a holiday for fear of offending other religionists who would not tolerate it if their religious festivals were similarly dumbed-down.

But Christians, who are upset at the political correctness that openly and without shame attacks the Christian faith, are compelled by that very attitude to engage in self-examination. It begins with asking oneself, "What is Christmas really all about? Whose birth are we celebrating?" Unless one is ready to acknowledge and confess that all men are sinners and under the wrath of God, and by sin separated from God, any protest of a politically correct Christmas is a sham. Unless one recognizes and confesses that the Christ of Bethlehem is the incarnate Son of God - true God from eternity, and true Man born of the virgin, Mary - any protest about a politically correct Christmas is hollow. Unless one recognizes that the Christ of Bethlehem is the Savior of the world apart from Whom there is no eternal life, any protest of a politically correct is hypocrisy. Unless one recognizes that the cross of Christ is as important as the manger in which He was laid, any protest of a politically correct Christmas is empty rhetoric. Anyone who turns the Christ of Bethlehem and the cross into a nothing more than an example of Christian living might as well give up the protest of a politically correct Christmas! Anyone who professes to be upset at a politically correct Christmas but who at the same time denies the Word of God is deceiving self, and engaging in empty protest. Furthermore, to protest the world's mistreatment of Christ is meaningless if after the celebration of His birth a Christian should be neglectful of Him and His Word when the celebration of Christmas is past.

There is no Christmas without Christ. Celebration of Christmas without Christ is a contradiction and hypocrisy. But it is a greater contradiction and hypocrisy, and the more serious when a Christian protests the world's abuse of it, then himself closes his heart to the Savior of the world. That is fatal unbelief!

A true Christ believer will not be among them for Christ will find room in the heart of each believer who knows and confesses the purpose of His coming, how He came to bear the sins of many, and to give life to all who believe in Him. Let the world do what it will. With Christ in the manger of our heart we rejoice that He was "made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians 4: 4,5). How glad we are each Christmas day and every day!

Written by Rev. Daniel Fleischer (12/10/2006)

> *THE ANNOUNCEMENTS* >

• **Christmas Caroling:** A caroling outing is slated for this afternoon. We plan on meeting at the church at 3:00 p.m. It is always exciting to be able to make people smile by singing praises about our Savior in this special way. Children are also encouraged to come and sing.

• **Candlelight Service:** This Wednesday, Dec. 20th, will be an evening meditative service at 7 pm of Christmas songs and readings. We will continue our series of services focused on "Angels We Have Heard on High." This service will also be preceded by the soup supper at 6 pm. A donation basket will available. Any funds remaining after the cost of supplies has been covered will be donated to the church floor fund.

• **Christmas Eve Rehearsal** One more rehearsal remains, perhaps the most important. This will be next Sunday during the normal Sunday School hour of 9:00 am. Please have the children here before 9:00 so that we can get started right away. We'll have just enough time to

run through the service, so a timely start will help ensure that we do. There will be no Bible Class next Sunday. Parents, please continue to help your children so that they might know their parts well for Christmas Eve. We sincerely appreciate the work the children have put in thus far.

· **Christmas Worship Services:** While family get-togethers for Christmas Eve can be a very fine custom, please remember the real reason for the season. We have a wonderful window of opportunity to worship Christ the newborn King just as the shepherds did the very first Christmas. First, on Christmas Eve at 6:00 pm the children will be presenting a worship service with the theme: "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing." On Christmas Day morning there will be another service at 10:00 am, continuing our Advent theme, this time listening to the message of the entire host of angels to the shepherds. May the message of the angels resound in your heart!

· **Vacation:** Pastor Hein and his family will be departing to Corpus Christi, TX, for vacation the day after Christmas. They will be visiting Janelle's folks. They plan to be back in Fridley by January 5. Until such time that they return, please be sure to contact one of the Elders: Michael Dick (763-757-2492), Al Rosendahl (763-571-3170), or Benno Sydow (651-484-4043). Pastor David Schierenbeck from Berea Lutheran may also be contacted (651-454-7689; Cell: 651-492-2323).

· **Among Us:** Jennifer Paplow is engaged to Chuck Kleifgen, tentatively planning a wedding for September 29, 2007. May they seek Christ-like love in their union! Gil Maestas is now going to need another back surgery after the turn of the year. May the Lord's will continue to prevail in all our lives.

· **Pictorial Directory:** Plans are underway for publishing a pictorial directory of Grace's members. As a "heads up," we are currently scheduled for member pictures on February 16 and 17. Please mark your calendars. More information will be forthcoming.

· **Nomination Slate for 2007:** President: Paul Lentz, Michael Dick; Vice President: Don Auel, Pat Paplow; Secretary: Brian Bergstrom, Roger Ochsner; Treasurer: Jeff Radichel, Benno Sydow; Financial Secretary: Ole Ohlmanson, Brandon Paplow; Elder: Frank Radichel, Dave Rust; Education: Matt Dick, Bob Vandever; Trustee: Phil Radichel, Eli Wales.

· **CLC News:** Julie Lau, wife of Prof. Joe Lau, suffered a hemorrhagic stroke a week ago from yesterday. Her right side is affected. There is some movement in her right foot, but no movement in her right arm and the right side of her face. More tests need to be done. Pastor Kevin McKenney of Faith Ev. Lutheran Church in Cambridge, WI, has suffered through a series of serious ailments possibly related to MS. Apparently he has been in and out of the hospital since October, the doctors still mystified as to what is wrong. Please include the Lau and McKenney family in your prayers as the Lord's servants focus us on the cure of our real problems, the message of the manger.

· **Reminder from the Elders:** Per Voter resolution, all loose offerings collected during December will be distributed equally among the four called workers of the congregation.

Sun. Offering:	Grace:	2,254.88	CLC:	316.05
Wed. Offering:	Grace:	554.00	CLC:	180.00
<i>Weekly Need:</i>	<i>Grace:</i>	<i>2,970.00</i>	<i>CLC:</i>	<i>850.00</i>
<i>-Under / +Over:</i>	<i>Grace:</i>	<i>-161.12</i>	<i>CLC:</i>	<i>-353.95</i>
Year-to-Date Offering::	Grace:	145,532.54	CLC:	44,301.53
Year-to-Date Need:	Grace:	148,500.00	CLC:	42,500.00
<i>Year-to-Date (+/-)</i>	<i>Grace:</i>	<i>-2,967.46</i>	<i>CLC:</i>	<i>+1,801.53</i>
Other Offerings:	Living Faith:	1.00	Tuition:	60.00
GLC Other:	350.00	MDF:	370.00	Kinship: 70.00
ILC Student Aid:	1.00	ILC Bldg.	0.00	IIF: 0.00 CEF: 0.00