

✠ TODAY AT GRACE ✠

Organist: Jan Davis

Elder: Dale Enns

Ushers: Paul Lentz; Brad Kitzman; Rick Nelson; Keith Radichel; Bob Vandever

Counting Team 2: Gary Gunther; Rick Nelson; Bill Rust; Bob Vandever; Clint Welker

Hospitality Team 3: Larry Nelson; Barb Sydow; Nick & Miranda Duehlmeier; Dan & Cindy Degnan

Church Cleaners: Kitzman School: Middleton

✠ NEXT WEEK AT GRACE ✠

Ushers: Paul Lentz; Brad Kitzman; Rick Nelson; Keith Radichel; Bob Vandever

Counting Team 3: Brian Eichstadt; Duane Enns; David Hein; Chad Hestekin; Benno Sydow

Hospitality: None for Dec. 24

Church Cleaners: Kitzman School: Nelson

✠ OUR SCHEDULE ✠

- Sun., Dec. 17:** 9:00 am – Bible Class & Sunday School
10:00 am –Worship Service (Advent 3)
11:00 am – Luncheon
11:30-1:30 pm – Children’s Christmas Eve Rehearsal
3:00 pm – Christmas Caroling
- Wed., Dec. 20:** 4:30 pm – Catechism for Public School Students
6:00 pm – Congregational Christmas Meal
7:00 pm – Candlelight Worship
- Fri., Dec. 22:** 12:00 pm – School Christmas Party (Gift Opening @ 2 pm)
Grace School Dismissal for Christmas Break
- Sun., Dec. 24:** **CHRISTMAS EVE**
8:30 am – Choir Practice
8:45 am – Children’s Christmas Eve Rehearsal
9:00 am – Bible Class
10:00 am – Worship Service (Advent 4) (No Hospitality)
5:30 pm – Children to Arrive at Church
6:00 pm – Christmas Eve Worship
- Mon., Dec. 25:** **CHRISTMAS DAY**
10:00 am – Christmas Day Worship
- Sun., Dec. 31:** **NEW YEARS EVE**
10:00 am –Worship Service (No Bible Class or Sunday School)
- Wed., Jan. 3:** 4:30 pm – Catechism for Public School Students
- Sun., Jan. 7:** 8:30 am – Choir Practice
9:00 am – Bible Class & Sunday School
10:00 am – Worship Service (Epiphany 1);
11:00 am – Hospitality
11:30 am – Special Voters Meeting (Call Meeting for Teacher)

Grace Lutheran Church & School



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Fridley, MN 55432

Email: john.p.hein@gmail.com

Home Page: www.FridleyLutheran.org

Member: CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION



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

Phone: 763-784-8784

School Phone: 763-784-6340

Grades: Kindergarten-8th

Church Year: Advent 3

Date: December 17, 2017

✠ WORSHIP INFORMATION ✠

Hymns:

TLH 89: To Thee My Heart I Offer
TLH 272: When All the World Was Cursed
WS 715: Where Shepherds Lately Kneled
WS 706: Go Tell It on the Mountain

Listening assistance is available. Please ask an usher.

Worship Prep:

Psalms 111, TLH p. 147

Liturgy:

TLH, p. 5 (Projected)
Gloria: TLH 58 & 62

Scripture Reading:

Isaiah 61:1-3,10-11
1 Thess. 5:16-24

Sermon: John 1:6-8, 19-28

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. ⁸ He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. ... ¹⁹ Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰ He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." ²¹ And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." ²² Then they said to him, "Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" ²³ He said: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Make straight the way of the LORD,'" as the prophet Isaiah said." ²⁴ Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees. ²⁵ And they asked him, saying, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" ²⁶ John answered them, saying, "I baptize with water, but there stands one among you whom you do not know. ²⁷ "It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose." ²⁸ These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing. (NKJVTM)

Your Unworthiness Yet Your
Privilege to Witness Christ

✠ THE ANNOUNCEMENTS ✠

◆ **Christmas Caroling:** A caroling outing is scheduled for today at 3 pm. Please speak with Pastor Hein should you have interest in singing with us. It is always exciting to be able to make people smile by singing praises about our Savior in this special way.



◆ **Candlelight Worship:** This Wednesday, December 20, 7 pm, will be our annual candlelight service with hymns and Bible readings. We continue our meditations on "Mothers of Advents," considering the reactions of different mothers in the Bible to the coming Child. The Sunday School and Christian Day School children will be singing.

◆ **Christmas Meal:** Please join us for a fellowship meal at 6 pm prior to the Candlelight service this Wednesday. Those attending may bring sandwiches, salads, or a dish to share. Dorcas Guild #1 is hosting.



◆ **Christmas Eve Rehearsals:**

- Sun., Dec. 17: 11:30-1:30 pm (luncheon at church and may start a bit early)
- Sun., Dec. 24: 8:45-9:45 am (please be here at 8:45 am so that we can start promptly in order to get through everything)

The last rehearsal on December 24 is the most critical as it is the dress rehearsal. The children have a wonderful opportunity to express the Good News of our salvation through Jesus Christ.

◆ **Christmas Eve Worship:** Our Christmas Eve service will be held at 6:00 pm with our children presenting the Christmas Gospel. The theme this year is: *Savior of the Nations!* The children are asked to be here 1/2 hour prior to the service so that we can take a group picture and run through things.



◆ **Christmas Day Worship:** This will be next Monday at 10:00 am. Christ's birth is the reason for the season. May the love of this Child be the gift you open up your heart to on Christmas Day!

◆ **Christmas Eve Video:** A reminder that we are having a Christmas Eve service instead of a Christmas Eve program. Therefore, we ask that parents and friends avoid taking flash pictures and videotaping during this service so that the focus remains on the joyous message of our Savior's birth. Our Christmas Eve service will be discreetly videotaped and made available by request. If you are interested in a copy, please speak with Pastor, Frank Radichel, or Rick Nelson.

◆ **Nativity Scene:** Please remember that the nativity scene in the narthex is fragile. Parents are asked to supervise their children around it.

◆ **Council Meeting:** Due to the busy December schedule, the Council meeting has been a challenge to schedule. After consultation with the Board chairs, there is not much business. There is one small matter that will likely be done by email.

◆ **Special Voters Meeting:** At the October Voters meeting, a motion was passed to have two full time teachers at Grace Lutheran School with individual classrooms starting in the 2018-19 school year. In order to start preparing for this, on January 7, after worship, there will be a special Voters meeting in order to call a second full-time teacher.

◆ **Student Teacher:** Grace has been assigned Michaela Winters as its student teacher from January 2 until mid-March. If anyone would be willing to provide housing, please speak with Janelle Hein.

◆ **Blood Drive Results:** Thank you to all of our donors on Nov. 26. If you did not grab a tee shirt there are a few extras in pastor's office. A total of 15 units were collected. These donations are already helping patients in need. Thank you for making a life-saving difference!

◆ **New Address:** Al and Marj Rosendahl: 2223 Woodcrest Court; Woodbury, MN 55129; Home: 651-436-3130

◆ **Catechism Break:** We will be having a break for midweek Catechism students on Dec. 27. Class will resume on Jan. 3.

◆ **2018 Cleaning:** The 2018 cleaning sign-up list is now posted on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall. Please consider signing up.

◆ **God's Promise Kept:** A new book written by Rev. Dale Redlin is entitled: GOD'S PROMISE KEPT. You may order copies from Dale Redlin at hope-dale@juno.com. Postage is included with pre-publication orders. They are \$15.00 --- no tax.

◆ **CLC News:** Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer of Trinity Lutheran in Spokane, WA, has returned the call to Immanuel Lutheran in Mankato, MN.

◆ **From the Elders:** All loose offerings collected during December will be distributed equally among the congregation's called workers.

◆ **Sunday School Memory Work:** Christmas Eve Recitations

The following is the nomination slate for 2018:

- Treasurer: Brian Bergstrom
- Elder: Frank Radichel; Eli Wales
- Education: Larry Nelson, Rick Nelson
- Trustee: Brad Kitzman, Bob Vandever
- Delegates: Rick Nelson, Ryan Oman, Bill Rust, Benno Sydow

Last Week's Stats: Dec. 10, 2017			
Sun.: 113	S.S.: 22	B.Cl.: 45	Wed.: 52
Sun. Offering:	Grace: \$2,539.00	CLC: \$440.00	
Wed. Offering:	Grace: 1,150.00	CLC: 275.00	
Weekly Need:	Grace: 3,300.00	CLC: 950.00	
-Under / +Over:	Grace: +389.00	CLC: -235.00	
Year-to-Date Offering:	Grace: \$161,269.69	CLC: \$45,075.00	
Year-to-Date Need:	Grace: 165,000.00	CLC: 47,500.00	
Year-to-Date (+/-)	Grace: -3,730.31	CLC: -2,425.00	
GLC Other: 505.00	Living Faith: 0.00	Tuition Aid: 100.00	
SAF Endowment: 0.00	MDF: 0.00	Kinship: 0.00	
ILC Student Aid: 150.00	ILC Bldg. 20.00	IIF: 120.00	CEF: 0.00
Current Balances:		Parking Lot: 32,090.75	Tuition Aid: 3,660.12

CLC Financial Report - November

CLC Financial Report Operating Funds	Balance 7/1/2017	YTD Revenue	YTD Disbursed	Budget 5 Months	Balance 11/30/2017
General Fund	0	385,351	406,147	387,500	- 20,796
ILC Operations	0	611,938	499,023	220,000	112,915
Total	\$0	\$997,289	\$905,170	\$607,500	92,119
Auxiliary Funds					
ILC Improvement Fund (IIF)	27,274	6,056	6,444		26,886
ILC Building Projects (AC/Dorm)	- 49,213	81,012	177,101		- 145,302
Mission Development Fund (MDF)	61,237	62,159	77,477		45,919
Kinship	43,040	42,643	49,759		35,924
Church Extension Fund (CEF)	1,030,843	448,069	264,222		1,214,690
Student Aid Fund (SAF)	68,917	63,051	67,480		64,488
Reserve Fund	225,190	0	0		225,190
Total	\$1,407,288	\$702,990	\$642,483		\$1,467,795

ILC Bldg Projects Mortgage (Academic Center Bal & North Hall Reno)	
Beginning Balance November 1, 2017	\$1,460,931
Current Balance November 30, 2017	\$1,457,801
Principal paid to date	\$3,130
North Hall Reno - Final Spent & incl in Mortgage	\$253,714

Notes:

- * **General Fund** offerings in November totaled \$112,493 vs disbursements of \$91,436, a positive cash flow reducing the General Fund deficit by \$21,056. General Fund offerings needed per month are \$77,500.
- * **ILC Building Projects** offerings in November totaled \$1582 vs disbursements of the first monthly payment of \$8,000 on the newly consolidated loan on the Academic Center balance and the \$253,714 renovation expenses for North Hall boys' dorm. The December financial report will reflect reimbursements to the Projects Fund from the Convention-approved CEF loan, restoring the Building Fund to its pre-renovation balance of around \$24,000. Offerings that are substantially above the \$24,000 Building Fund reserve are paid directly on the loan principal, saving interest & decreasing the loan term.
- * **CEF:** revenues in November totaled \$45,717, mainly from congregation & ILC loan repayments.
- * **MDF:** offerings in November totaled \$13,615 vs disbursements of \$38,051, which included special support for foreign mission outreach & projects, expenses for our full- & part-time missionaries recent travel for several pastoral conferences in the foreign fields, and special gifts of rice for foreign mission pastors & Christmas gifts for the Kinship orphans.
- * **SAF:** received \$12,242 in November from offerings (\$5916) and student loan re-payments (\$6,325) vs disbursements of \$12,031, mainly for the monthly allocation for student awards & loans. The annual SAF budget is \$160,000 and provides student loans, grants, & scholarships. It is funded by congregational offerings, student loan repayments, and some Endowment earnings.

James E. Sandeen, CLC Treasurer

Thomas J. Lentz, Chairman, CLC Board of Trustees

OUR GOD IS FAITHFUL

Of the many gods in the world, there is only one true, eternal, God. He is not a god of human imagination, created out of a feeling of desperation, fear, or a sense of piousness. The gods of human creation or imagination are inventions in time, and are either dead, or to the extent that man sees himself as god unto himself, are dying.

The heathen in the Old Testament had many and multiple gods and goddesses, e.g. Dagon (Philistines), Astarte and Baal (Canaanites), Marduk (Babylonians); later the Romans and the Greeks had multiple gods, the Muslims had and have their god, the Hindi have their gods. The native Americans still have their spirit gods. Today witchcraft is increasingly popular. Every religion promotes some god out of a feeling born of the natural knowledge (since the fall, imperfect) of the true God, whom the heathen do not acknowledge. "The heathen had to a certain extent a knowledge of God from the natural Law, although they neither knew Him aright nor glorified Him aright." ⁽¹⁾ Every rational being has a lingering fear that someday he will have to answer to a being higher than himself. Thus, every heathen religion also has some form of worship. "No people have ever been so godless so as not to establish and maintain some divine service." ⁽²⁾ Recognizing this, Paul said to the Athenians: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; ⁽³⁾ for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands" (Acts 17: 22-24).

In contrast to the heathen gods, Samuel said, "No one is holy like the Lord, for there is none besides You, nor is there any rock like our God" ^(1 Samuel 2:2). He is eternal; not the creation of the mind. He is not a national god. He is the God acknowledged, recognized, and named by all of whatever nationality who call upon Him in faith according to the names He gives Himself, names recorded in the Book of Books, the Bible. He is the God who has left evidence of Himself in creation. "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse" ^(Romans 1:20). Imperfect since the fall into sin, nevertheless, humans have the reminder of God in their conscience: "the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them ..." ^(Romans 2:15).

Beyond the evidence of creation and conscience, the faithful God confirms His being as well as the coming judgment in the *revealed Word (the Holy Scriptures)* in which He describes the judgment to come upon all who deny Him. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. They who don't believe it can deny it. They cannot escape it. Fear of divine retribution contributes to heathen creation of gods, and superstitious incantations.

Of the living Triune God, Moses wrote to the covenant people: “Therefore know that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments, and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates Him: He will repay him to his face” (Deuteronomy 7:9-10).

But primarily, the Lord God has revealed Himself in the inspired Word for the comfort of troubled sinners who look in faith unto Him for salvation from the judgment the heathen fear. God’s Word assures us, “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit” (Romans 8:1).

Reaching back to the messianic promise in Eden, David wrote what was confirmed to him also in his life experience: “But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in mercy and truth” (Psalm 86:15). Divine grace, patience, and mercy are the essence of the Gospel message. These attributes of divine kindness toward us flow to us in every good and perfect gift which is from above (James 1:17). God’s faithfulness, mercy, and compassion are embodied in the incarnate Son of God, our Lord Jesus Who is the in-time, in-the-flesh confirmation of the Father’s faithfulness. These attributes of God are confirmed likewise by the gift of the Spirit who was promised, and by whom we believe. The Father Who promised the Savior fulfilled His promise and reconciled us to Himself through the Lord Jesus. He called us to faith by the Spirit, but He has still more for us. All He has said and promised will be. “He who calls you is faithful Who also will do it” (1 Thessalonians 5:24).

By God’s grace and mercy first administered in our baptism, and reiterated through the preaching of the Gospel and the blessing of the Sacrament, we have been called and preserved in the faith. As we celebrate the birth of our Savior, and follow Him through His ministry to the cross of Calvary, and rejoice in the resurrection, and in His ascension, we are called to the hope of heaven. Here again our confidence lies in the faithful God, “by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:9).

In a world increasingly bold in its rejection of the Gospel, in a world foreign to citizens of heaven, in a world spinning out of control, we are confident to say with the apostle Paul who in his last prison epistle said, “there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:8). Paul knew in whom he believed and was confident that He would deliver what He had promised.

The totality of God’s love for His children through which He daily forgives our sin, attends our walk through this life, and ultimately receives us to heaven, began already in eternity. “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I sanctified you, I ordained you a prophet to the

nations” (Jeremiah 1:15), the Lord said to Jeremiah. In the same manner by His grace in Christ Jesus “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world ...” (Ephesians 1:4). What the Lord determined in eternity He brought to pass in time through the One Who was born in the “fullness of time ... that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Galatians 4:4).

This is what Christmas celebration is all about. What is a Christmas which passes with the melting snow and is forgotten with the packed away decorations, and the passing of temporary shallow feel-good emotions? How void and bare Christmas is without confidence in God’s faithfulness and without faith in Christ. *What is the point* of celebrating Christmas if Christ is not the center of it, and confident hope of heaven the fruit of it?

We who wait on the faithful Lord and God have the same struggles, afflictions, trials, setbacks, troubles and stresses that afflict the heathen. So what is the difference between them and us? In various places in Scripture our Father invites us to call upon Him and has promised to hear us. Faith responds, “This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us” (1 John 5:14). Our God says, “I have surely seen the oppression of My people ... and have heard their cry” (Exodus 3:7). By contrast, the gods of the heathen can neither hear, nor speak, nor help (1 Kings 18, Isaiah 44).

From Eden, to Bethlehem, to Calvary, to the empty tomb, to the mount of ascension, the faithfulness of our God is manifest. The birth of our Lord confirms: “God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good” (Numbers 23:19)? Christ, the Resurrection and the Life said, “And this is the will of Him Who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise Him up at the last day” (John 6:40); consequently “We shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:17), where He is, as He promised on the ascension mount. This is the last great promise to be fulfilled.

In his farewell address, Joshua reminded the people whom he had led into the promised Land: “Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed” (Joshua 23:14).

Blessed are all whose God is the Lord and call upon His name, for they shall partake of the ultimate divine promise. To Him Who has come and will come again we pray, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 3:20).

-- Written by Rev. Daniel Fleischer, 12/2017

1) *Formula of Concord*, Th. D Art. V.22 Triglott, p.959

2) *Large Catechism*, Triglott, para 17, p.585

3) The Greek word also means superstitious.