

✝ TODAY AT GRACE ✝

Organist: Jan Davis

Elder: Frank Radichel

Ushers: Brian Eichstadt; Kevin Baker; Dan Degnan;
Brandon Paplow; Pat Paplow

Counting Team 3: Brian Eichstadt; Duane Enns; Dan
Degnan; Benno Sydow

Church Cleaners: Volunteers? School: Pearson

✝ NEXT WEEK AT GRACE ✝

Ushers: Brian Eichstadt; Kevin Baker; Dan Degnan;
Brandon Paplow; Pat Paplow

Counting Team 4: James Bomber; Paul Lentz; Roger
Ochsner; Al Rosendahl; Dave Rust

Church Cleaners: Volunteers? School: NA

✝ OUR SCHEDULE ✝

Sun., Dec. 23: 8:45 am – Christmas Eve Rehearsal

9:00 am – Bible Class

10:00 am – Worship Service (Advent 4)

12:00 pm – Council Meeting

Mon., Dec. 24: CHRISTMAS EVE

5:30 pm – Children Arrive at Church

6:00 pm – Christmas Eve Worship

Tue., Dec. 25: CHRISTMAS DAY

10:00 am – Christmas Day Worship

Wed., Dec. 26: No Catechism

Sun., Dec. 30: 10:00 am – Worship Service (No Bible Class, Sunday School)

Mon., Dec. 31: NEW YEAR'S EVE

7:00 pm – New Year's Eve Worship w/Lord's Supper

Wed., Jan. 2: No Catechism

Sun., Jan. 6: 9:00 am – Bible Class & Sunday School

10:00 am – Worship Service w/Lord's Supper (Epiphany)

11:00 am – Hospitality

Sun., Jan. 13: 8:30 am – Choir Practice

9:00 am – Bible Class

10:00 am – Worship Service (Epiphany 1)

12:00 pm – Council Meeting

Sun., Jan. 20: Voters & Dorcas Guild Meetings



Grace Lutheran Church & School

*The virgin will be with
child and will give
birth to a son,
and will call him
Immanuel.*

Isaiah 7:14



Grace Lutheran Church & School



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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 4

Date: December 23, 2018

✠ THE ORDER OF WORSHIP ✠

Worship Preparation: *Psalm 146, TLH p. 156*

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*

Drop down with grace, ye heavens, Drop down now from above.

And let the skies show favor With righteousness and love.

Let earth bring forth salvation, Let His bright light arise!

The heav'ns declare His glory, The firmament His praise.

Advent Candle Lighting: *The Angel Candle*

We light this candle as a symbol of purity. This we will experience when the pure and holy angels accompany Jesus' coming again on the last day. May the visitation of Your Holy Spirit, O God, purify us that we may be ready for the coming of Jesus, our hope and joy.

O come, O come, Emmanuel!

Response: *TLH 62, st. 4: Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel*

Oh, come, Thou Key of David, come

And open wide our heav'nly home;

Make safe the way that leads on high

And close the path to misery.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel

Shall come to thee, O Israel.



First Reading: *Hebrews 2:9-15*

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. The virgin will be with Child and give birth to a Son,

C: And they will call His name Immanuel, God with us. Alleluia.



Second Reading: *Luke 1:26-38*

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

Hymn: *TLH 274: Praise We the Lord This Day*

Sermon: *Isaiah 7:14*

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. (NKJVTM)

Expect Great Things From Christmas!

Guest Speaker: Professor Paul Naumann

Offertory: *TLH p. 12 f.*

Hymn: *TLH 76: A Great and Mighty Wonder*

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

Hymn: *WS 705: Come, O Long-Expected Jesus*

"... because there was no room for them in the inn." There are many of you in this congregation who think to yourselves: "If only I had been there! How quick I would have been to help the Baby! I would have washed His linen. How happy I would have been to go with the shepherds to see the Lord lying in the manger!" Yes, you would! You say that because you know how great Christ is, but if you had been there at that time you would have done no better than the people of Bethlehem. Childish and silly thoughts are these! Why don't you do it now? You have Christ in your neighbor. You ought to serve him, for what you do to your neighbor in need you do to the Lord Christ Himself. – From The Martin Luther Christmas Book

✠ THE ANNOUNCEMENTS ✠

- ◆ **Thanks** to Professor Paul Naumann from Immanuel Lutheran High School, College, and Seminary in Eau Claire, WI (where he lives with his wife, Carol), for presenting the Advent message today while Pastor Hein recovers from back surgery.
- ◆ **Christmas Worship:** Our Christmas Eve service will be held at 6:00 pm with our children presenting the Christmas Gospel. The theme this year is: *Flow, River, Flow*. 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 will be held at 10:00 am.
- ◆ **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.
- ◆ **Catechism Break:** We will be having a two-week break for midweek Catechism students on Dec. 26 and Jan. 2.
- ◆ **From the Elders:** All loose offerings collected during December will be distributed equally among the congregation's called workers.
- ◆ **2019 Cleaning:** The 2019 cleaning sign-up list is now posted on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall. Please consider signing up.
- ◆ **Mission Helper Trip:** Applications for the upcoming CLC Mission Helper Trip to India will be accepted until January 7. You can apply online at: www.mht.lutheranmissions.org. There is still lots of room for more volunteers. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Missionary Todd Ohlmann at thohlmann@gmail.com / (314) 517-0177.
- ◆ **Women's Retreat:** The Midwest Christian Women's Retreat, sponsored by Immanuel Lutheran in Mankato, MN, will be held March 22-24 at the Riverport Inn & Suites, Winona, MN. Registration is \$75 and opens on Jan. 1, and will be limited to the first 120 applicants. Register at www.ladiesretreat.clclutheran.net. Choose the "Midwest Spring Retreat." Hotel reservations (separate from retreat registration) can be made by calling (507) 452-0606, with the special block rate (mention "retreat") for our group available now. Deadline for both retreat registration and hotel reservations is Fri., Feb. 22, 2019.
- ◆ **KINSHIP Sponsors:** The CLC KINSHIP Committee is seeking sponsors to support overseas orphans and seminary students. There are both students and orphans that will not have financial support starting in January if we do not find new sponsors. Please give this prayerful consideration. For more information, please see, email, or text Dan Roehl (danroehl@hotmail.com / 507-381-2042).
- ◆ **CLC News:** Pastor Ed Starkey of Resurrection Lutheran in Corpus Christi, TX, has accepted the call to Our Redeemer's Lutheran in Red Wing, MN.

Christmas:

C is for **C**hrist-Child holy Baby so small
H is for **H**eaven He opened for us all,
R is for **R**ansom for our souls He paid,
I is for **I**nfant in the manger laid,
S is for **S**hepherds who went to the stall.
T is for **T**idings that Christ came for all,
M is for **M**essage that Jesus is King,
A is for **A**ngels who glory did sing,
S is for **S**avior who died for our sin.

Welcome to our guests and visitors. We appreciate the opportunity to share God's Word with you today. Please come again! Those interested in learning more about the Scriptures and our doctrinal position, please speak with the Pastor. He would be delighted to visit with you!

The following is the nomination slate for 2019:

- Chairman: Rick Nelson; Michael Ude
- Elder: Phil Radichel; Eli Wales
- Education: Larry Nelson, Phil Radichel
- Trustee: Larry Nelson, Phil Radichel, Eli Wales
- Delegates: Rick Nelson, Ryan Oman, Bill Rust, Dave Rust, Benno Sydow

Last Week's Stats: Dec. 16, 2018		Sun.: 103	S.S.: 13	B.Cl.: 34	Wed.: 82
Sun. Offering:	Grace:	\$2,966*	CLC:	\$465	
Wed. Offering:	Grace:	\$690	CLC:	\$0	
Weekly Need:	Grace:	3,700	CLC:	1,000	
-Under / +Over:	Grace:	-44	CLC:	-535	
Year-to-Date Offering:	Grace:	\$177,864**	CLC:	\$49,638	
Year-to-Date Need:	Grace:	185,000	CLC:	50,000	
Year-to-Date (+/-)	Grace:	-7,136	CLC:	-362	
Total Budget for Year:	Grace:	192,500	CLC:	52,000	
Difference from budget (+/-)	Grace:	-14,636	CLC:	-2,362	
GLC Other: 824	Living Faith: 0	Tuition Aid: 125			
SAF Endowment: 15	MDF: 200	Kinship: 60			
ILC Student Aid: 0	ILC Bldg. 0	IIF: 0	CEF: 0		
Current Balances:		Tuition Aid: \$2,862			
		* Includes \$0 in school tuition ** Includes \$4,342 school-year-to-date tuition			

AS GOD HAS PROMISED, IT IS SO

Written by Rev. Daniel Fleischer, 11/2018

To Eve and Adam who had sinned,
And lost their blessed first estate,
The God of heaven spoke in love.
He gave to them a promise true.
They were the first to whom it came--
It was the promise of the Seed,
Who'd come in time, a little child,
Yet conquer Satan, sin, and death.

To Abram then the promise came;
Of his seed the Seed would come,
Of Sarah yet of barren womb,
Would in God's time be born a son.
Though not the promised Conqueror
The promised seed, Isaac by name,
And Jacob who would follow him,
Forefathers of the Seed would be.

To Mary, chosen virgin mild,
When God determined it was time,
The angel Gabriel was sent
To let her know what God would do.
With heavenly words that stunned her so.
She'd be the mother of the child,
The sinless Seed, God's Son He'd be,
As promised first when mankind fell.

To Joseph came the stunning news.
The virgin was to be with child.
She would conceive and bear the Seed,
By power of the Holy Ghost.
The angel calmed the just man's fear:
The Seed was Jesus, God's own Son,
Most truly God, but yet true Man,
The Conqueror o'er death and hell.

The angel then told shepherd folk,
The message came from heav'n above,
That Christ had come as long foretold.
"To you this night the Seed is born,
He is your Savior, Christ the Lord."
Born in a lowly manger bed."
The Conqueror o'er death and hell
Has truly come, God's Word is truth.

The Savior's birth is told to all,
Throughout the ages of the world.
So richly blessed are all who trust
The faithful God, His Word of life.
The Father loved the world and gave,
His own dear Son, our Savior dear.
He brings to us the gift of Life,
We shall not perish; we shall live!



PEACE ON EARTH

Christmas is a time of joy for a reason the world does not understand. In connection with the birth of Jesus, the Savior of sinners, the angel announced, "Peace on Earth." The phrase is heard on the airwaves, heard in the malls, printed in Christmas cards, mouthed in greetings, intoned by politicians. How can one be so bold to say the world does not understand it? Because it does not understand or accept the purpose or real meaning of Jesus' birth.

The Savior whose birth was the occasion of the angelic announcement said to His disciples, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). These words spoken to the disciples on the night of the Savior's betrayal, were echoed after His resurrection when Jesus appeared to the disciples who were behind closed doors "for fear of the Jews." Jesus said to them, "Peace be with you" (John 20:19), and then again, "Peace to you" (v.20)! He went on to say, "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." The thrust of the message they were to carry with them was the message of forgiveness of sins. "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them ..." (v.23).

Because the world does not understand the purpose and meaning of Jesus birth, it neither understands the peace the angels announced to the shepherds, nor the peace of which the Lord was speaking, and which the disciples (and the Church) were to proclaim. The counter part of forgiveness of sins is the retention of sins of those who do not confess their sins, "... if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (v.23). The peace of which the angels spoke and of which Jesus spoke is peace with God, Who in His grace and mercy reconciled the world unto Himself, "not imputing their trespasses to them" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Even those who with all sincerity say, "Jesus is the reason for the season" do not necessarily understand the angelic message if they do not recognize that the reason for His birth was to address the *sin* problem. Yes, sin which separated man from the holy God; sin which brought the curse of death and judgment upon mankind. Sin and unbelief separate the sinner from God. Forgiveness of sin and faith in Christ restores the broken relationship. Without sin we would have been in perpetual heaven. If sin had not violated and broken the relationship between God and man, there would have been no need (reason) for the birth of Jesus, no Christmas! Consequently, they who do not confess sin in their lives and do not accept the truth of their condemnation before God, and finally do not admit to the need for a Savior celebrate an empty Christmas. The personal benefit of forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God is lost to those who reject the apostle's call to believe in the Lord Jesus through whom God in His mercy and grace reconciled them to Himself. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us" (1 John 1:8-10). To lose what the Heavenly Father has given freely in Christ is the greatest of tragedies.

The apostle Paul wrote, “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself ...” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Reconciliation with God from whom man by sin estranged and estranges himself is necessary. That blessed peace which is the consequence of reconciliation, however, is forfeited by those who though they may acknowledge sin nevertheless believe that they must or can reconcile themselves unto God, or at least contribute to their reconciliation. Note, the passage does not say that man reconciles himself to God. If that had been possible, Adam and Eve would not have hidden themselves in the garden. If that had been possible, Jesus would not have had to come. “There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5), Who reconciled man unto God.

The sinner cannot reconcile himself to God through anything that he does. *No works, no good intentions, no personal efforts, no amount of remorse, no tears, no indulgence, nothing* the sinner does can restore man’s relationship with God. The passage says ***God reconciled man unto Himself in Christ***. Those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are in the fullest and most glorious sense reconciled unto God, but God was and is the Planner, the Initiator, the Source, and the One Who alone restored fellowship with himself. Consequently, as many as believe on His name have assurance of eternal life.

Scripture further tells us, “Therefore having been justified by faith, we have *peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Romans 5:1-2). Reconciliation with God in Christ and having been justified before God through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus is the substance of the peace proclaimed by the angels and spoken by the Lord Himself. Come what may in this world of sin, trouble, and uncertainty, all who understand the love of God announced by the angels can both live and die in peace knowing that *the Lord Jesus has made their peace* with the Father in heaven.

This is not the concept of the peace of which the world speaks at Christmas. The world thinks totally in terms of cessation from anger, hatred, and war. In history nations at war have agreed to stop killing each other in a bow to Christmas “peace on earth”, after which they pick up arms again. The love and kindness of Christmas time in the world is soon packed away with the decorations.

Very obviously there is benefit in the peace which the world seeks. Surely, Christ-believers who understand the peace of forgiveness and salvation in Christ, take no back seat in the wish for cessation of anger, hatred, war, and every other cause of unrest in the world. After all, we live here too while we await the Lord’s call to eternal glory. We pray to the reconciled Father for peace. We pray that He will bless our nation and the world, and that all people and nations will live peaceably with one another. We pray that peace and harmony will prevail and that in such an atmosphere we might freely proclaim the true peace in Christ to the world. The reality is that there will not be the kind of peace for which the world yearns until all know the peace of God which comes only through the Gospel.

Martin Luther in his commentary on Galatians spoke of the difference between the peace of God in Christ which passes all understanding and the peace which

the world pursues. “Worldly peace provides quiet enjoyment of life and possessions. But in affliction, particularly in the hour of death, the grace and peace of the world will not deliver us. However, the grace and peace of God will. They make a person strong and courageous to bear and to overcome all difficulties, even death itself, because we have the victory of Christ’s death and the assurance of the forgiveness of our sins.”

The assurance of God’s grace, of forgiveness of sins, of our justification through faith in Christ, of our reconciliation with the Father, with the attendant assurance of eternal life for all who believe, puts in stark contrast the peace the world pursues and the peace of which the Lord spoke when He said, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). The peace of those who reject Christ is a mirage that will disappear in the moment of death, for says the Lord who desires not the death of the wicked, “‘There is no peace’ says my God, ‘for the wicked’” (Isaiah 57:21).

As Jesus drew near to Jerusalem, He wept and said, “If you had known, even you, especially in this your day the things that make for your peace” (Luke 19:42)! Because Jerusalem did not know, He pronounced judgment upon it. It did not know what made for its peace, and it invited judgment because it rejected Him!

Today is our day. Today is the day for the world! If the gracious visit and message of Christ is despised in our day any pursuit of real peace is only an illusion.

The gracious Lord by the Spirit has called all who are saved from that illusionary life as He called the sinner to faith in Christ and has shown them in Him the real reason for the season.

To all who confess their sins, place themselves at the mercy of God, and cling to Christ, our Advocate with the Father (1 John 1:1-2), “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men” (Luke 2:14) is the grandest song ever sung until we join the saints in heaven and say, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen” (Revelation 7:12).

Only the prayers of the reconciled who believe in the Lord Jesus and call God Father ascend to the throne and are heard by Him. Therefore, let us pray for peace in the world. Let us pray for peace among people and nations on the earth. Let us pray for peace that we may live our life without fear. Let us pray for peace so that we may without hindrance share the real reason for Jesus’ birth with those who do not know the essence of the angel’s announcement of “peace on earth.” Real, true, meaningful peace for time and eternity is always connected to Christ and is the possession of those who believe in Him.

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).

“Grace be to you and peace be multiplied” (1 Peter 1:2).

Written by Rev. Daniel Fleischer, 12/2018