

Grace Lutheran Church & School



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Home Page: www.FridleyLutheran.org

Member: CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION



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

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School Phone: 763-784-6340

Grades: Kindergarten-8th

Church Year: Epiphany 1

Date: January 10, 2021

✠ WORSHIP INFORMATION ✠

Hymns:

TLH 129: Hail, Thou Source of Every Blessing

TLH 448: Brief Life Is Here Our Portion

TLH 658: Onward, Christian Soldiers

TLH 461: Hark! The Church Proclaims Her Honor

Listening assistance is available. Please ask an usher.

Worship Prep:

Psalms 2, TLH p. 123

Liturgy:

TLH, p. 5 (Projected)

Gloria: TLH 131:5

Scripture Readings:

Isaiah 49:1-6

Mark 1:4-11

Sermon: Acts 16:16-34

¹⁶ Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. ¹⁷ This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation." ¹⁸ And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very hour. ¹⁹ But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities. ²⁰ And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, "These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; ²¹ "and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe." ²² Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods. ²³ And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. ²⁴ Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. ²⁵ But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. ²⁷ And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. ²⁸ But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here." ²⁹ Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹ So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." ³² Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. ³³ And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. ³⁴ Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household. (NKJVTM)

PUBLIC PERSECUTION PRESENTS PRIVATE POTENTIAL

1. The world will pursue only its own temporal welfare
2. The church is to pursue the eternal welfare of others

✝ **THE ANNOUNCEMENTS** ✝

COVID-19 Pre-Cautions: If anyone is high risk, vulnerable, recently exposed to a COVID-19 patient, or has symptoms of illness (esp. high temp. and cough), the individual along with any others in that person's household are urged to stay home for one's own well-being and the well-being of others. Online worship is still available at FridleyLutheran.org. Due to the Governor's order, face coverings are required during worship at Grace. Children under the age of 2 are exempt. For physical distancing, post-its are on the pews that are to be used. Please remember to not block areas of foot traffic. Thank you for being mindful of your fellow Christians.

- ➔ **Voters & Dorcas Guild:** Will meet next Sunday, January 17.
- ➔ **Directory:** We are preparing for the annual Grace directory. Please check your contact information in the draft copy located in the narthex. Place a check mark by your entry if it is correct. If it is not, please edit as necessary. Your cooperation is appreciated as we attempt to produce an accurate directory. Also, please ensure your birthday and/or anniversary information is correct. Also, please indicate how you would like to be contacted via the contact tree.
- ➔ **Grace Students at ILHS:** Last week it was reported that there would likely be three Grace members attending Immanuel Lutheran High School in Eau Claire, WI, this coming semester. This has changed back to the two who have been attending. They have notes of appreciation posted on the bulletin board.
- ➔ **2021 Cleaning:** The 2021 cleaning sign-up list is now posted on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall. Please consider signing up.
- ➔ **Sunday School Memory Work:** #3 – First Commandment

Facebook Page: If you're on Facebook, be sure to like or share items that are on the Grace Lutheran Church page. This can help promote the page to others, along with events that we publicize there. The more shares, etc., the more Facebook promotes our church page to others.



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!

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Bible is Our Basis ...

... for a foundation	<i>For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 3:11</i>
... for strength	<i>God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1</i>
... for guidance	<i>Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path. Psalm 119:105</i>
... for salvation	<i>Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. Acts 4:12</i>
... for eternal life	<i>And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. John 17:3</i>
... for doctrine	<i>All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. 2 Timothy 3:16</i>
... for fellowship	<i>Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. Romans 16:17</i>
... for forgiveness	<i>In [Jesus] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1:14</i>
... for love	<i>In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 1 John 4:10</i>
... for wisdom	<i>The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. Proverbs 9:10</i>
... for truth	<i>Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. John 17:17</i>
... for peace	<i>And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:7</i>

SOME CAME WITH HASTE ... OTHERS FROM AFAR

Epiphany, January 6

Pause a moment to imagine the scene. Put yourself in that field when the first announcement of the birth of Jesus was made – not to kings and potentates, not to priests and city dwellers, but to the most common of commoners, to nobodies in society. In the silence of that night an angel of the Lord appeared, and the glory of the Lord shone around them. We can understand why they trembled, and the angel said, “Do not be afraid...” A message for the world fell first upon the ears and hearts of simple shepherds. “There is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11). Then a host of heavenly messengers chimed in, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men” (Luke 2:14).

Over 2000 years later we hear echoed on the street corners, in the malls, from seats of power “on earth peace, good will to men.” The words sound hollow; they hurt the ears and disturb the heart when they are a merchandising tool, as does the mouthing of those who have no respect for God and no concept of the peace of which the angels sang. Luther said, “Because they do not know and revere this Child, they rage and devour each other.” Without Christ, He wrote, and we witnessed it in spades the Christmas season of 2020, “What is the world if not a downright hell and nothing but lying, greed, gluttony, drunkenness, adultery, assault, and murder, that is, the very devil. Friends can no more be trusted than foes” (*The Martin Luther Christmas Book*, Fortress Press, p. 47,--tr. Roland Bainton, 1948).

Scripture does not say how long the messaging angels were present. That is of no consequence. Keep in mind that not only were shepherds to lead their sheep to green grass and still waters. It was their responsibility to guard the sheep from attacks of wolves and other predators. When the angels had departed, the shepherds set out for Bethlehem. They did not hem and haw. They did not wonder what would happen to the sheep. They left their flock, surely entrusting their care to the Lord. “Let us *now* go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us” (Luke 2:15). They went with “haste” to see and worship the Child Who was their Savior from sin, death and the power of the devil. *That is* the message of peace the angels brought.

Since the fall in Eden, all people are born in sin and are under the wrath of God. The shepherds were by nature no different than we, and we are no different by nature than our neighbors. Unless one ensnared by sin repents of his sin, he cannot know, understand, or appreciate the peace the angels announced. On the other hand, all who recognize their sin and know the horrible eternal consequence of unrepented sin (unbelief) will feel compelled to hasten with the shepherds to the manger, as well as to the cross, to worship the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:7).

“... And what a wealth of meaning lies not here!
The peace He came to bring all burdened souls
Is not a makeshift earthly armistice in carnal wars—
Ah no, ‘tis *peace eternal*, made twixt God and man,
A peace which brings surcease from every ill,
A peace surpassing far all human ken—
The angel-promised “Peace—good will to men!”
(*Evening Bells at Bethany*, p. 41, chapel devotion by Norman
Madson, Christmas, 1946).

A week before Christmas, 2020, we attended a funeral. At a funeral we are confronted with the reality of sin and its consequence. In the quiet contemplation of our Savior’s birth, His cross, and His eternal promise, there is a voice louder than the noise that surrounds us in this out-of-control world. It is from the lips of the Savior Himself, “My Son (daughter), be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you” (Matthew 9:2). With that assurance is also His promise, “I will come again and receive you to Myself” (John 14:3).

“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). This is the Christmas peace, the Easter peace, the peace that attends our death bed that the world cannot know. It is the peace that translates to eternal peace.

“God so loved the World,” both Jews and Gentiles -- the shepherds on Bethlehem’s field and the Gentile wise men (Magi) from the east. To the shepherds, light shown as an emanation of the glory of God. The Magi saw a Star. The shepherds hastened to Bethlehem the same night, and the wise men set out for Jerusalem to “worship Him.” (Matthew 2:1-12). Both were directed by the light of God’s Word.

The Magi came from the area of Persia (today, Iran). Obviously, they did not arrive the night of the Savior's birth. They were of the priestly type who practiced the heathen art of astrology. Among astrologers, there was a general expectation of a king who should arise from the Jews. Perhaps this expectation traced to the time of Daniel in Babylon. Their coming to worship Jesus was foretold by Isaiah, "The Gentiles shall come to your light. And kings to the brightness of your rising" (Isaiah 60:3).

They came to Herod, a cruel and ruthless potentate. He was an Idumean of the Jewish faith and ruled in Jerusalem. Upon the inquiry of the wise men as to where Jesus was born, he consulted his advisors who acquainted him with the prophecy of Micah that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). Following the special star, the wise men came to the house where Jesus was. They kneeled and "worshiped Him" (Matthew 2: 11).

Suggesting he wanted to worship Jesus, Herod had commanded the Magi to return with information where he might find Jesus. But the wise men were warned by the Lord not to return to Herod who intended to kill Jesus. When the wise men did not return, Herod in a rage "put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under" (Matthew 2:16). By so doing, he thought he would be rid of Jesus whom he considered a threat to his authority.

Jesus came into the world to die for sinners, to rescue us from the judgment to hell. He would die, not by the edict or hand of some deranged king, but at a time determined by the Father, and in His own time.

Here then follows a remarkable event in the life of Jesus Christ, true God, Who to identify with us and die for us took on Himself humanity, yet without sin. Jesus humbled Himself in our behalf. At the command of God, Joseph "took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt and was there until the death of Herod" (Matthew 2:14-15). Herod eventually died a horrible death. Thereafter, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying 'Out of Egypt I called My Son'" (Matthew 2:15), Joseph returned with Jesus and Mary.

The common shepherds and the priestly magi had some things in common. The shepherds went immediately with haste to worship Him. The wise men expended themselves and journeyed from afar to worship. The shepherds and Magi were moved uniquely by the Lord to seek out what they had heard and seen -- the shepherds by the angels, the wise men by the star that appeared. The shepherds were not ignorant of the prophecies. The

wise men were led by the Spirit to associate the star with what they had heard passed on through Jews who had been dispersed. Both worshiped the newborn Child, their Savior. The shepherds became the first missionaries of the Lord's birth as "they returned glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen as it was told to them" (Luke 2:20). The wise men were the first Gentiles to worship the Savior of the world.

We through eyes of faith also have seen the Savior, but through the light of the Word of God. We have seen our Savior in the depth of His humility bearing our sin, paying our debt, suffering our death and condemnation. We have through faith seen the Lord Jesus in His exaltation from His resurrection to His ascension. Ought we not have the same eager anticipation as the shepherds and Magi who rushed to see the newborn Savior of the world? Ought we not eagerly worship Him Who has won for us and prepared for us a place in heaven?

In the period of waiting during which we hope and look forward to being with Him where He is, how shall we respond to the Lord for His manifest grace by which we live? "My son, give Me your heart, and let your eyes observe My ways" (Proverbs 23:26). He delights in our response: "To Thee my heart I offer, O Christ child sweet and dear" (The *Lutheran Hymnal* – 89). Each day we can bring our thanks for His blessings -- spiritual and material. We can confess Him before the world, and through the preaching of the Good News invite others to join us in our travels to Bethlehem and the cross which end by faith in the new Jerusalem.

What can we bring? Our penitent hearts, our broken spirit, our fears, our concerns, our ills, our cares. Our Heavenly Father values our trust and confidence as we come to Him in the name of His Son.

"Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress; helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly,--Wash me, Savior, or I die." Amen.
(TLH 376).

Written by Rev. Daniel Fleischer, 1/2021



✠ TODAY AT GRACE ✠

Organist: Jan Davis

Elder: Eli Wales

Ushers: Larry Brandt; Jeremiah Boe; Nick Duehlmeier; Dale Enns; Duane Enns; Brandon Paplow; Pat Paplow

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

Church Cleaners: Hein

✠ NEXT WEEK AT GRACE ✠

Ushers: Larry Brandt; Jeremiah Boe; Nick Duehlmeier; Dale Enns; Duane Enns; Brandon Paplow; Pat Paplow

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

Church Cleaners: Volunteers?

✠ OUR SCHEDULE ✠

Sun., Jan. 10: 9:00 am – Sunday School & Bible Class
10:00 am – Worship Service (Epiphany 1)
12:00 pm – Council Meeting

Mon., Jan. 11: Grace School Returns

Wed., Jan. 13: 4:00 pm – Catechism for Public School Students
7:00 pm – Midweek Bible Class

Sun., Jan. 17: 9:00 am – Sunday School & Bible Class
10:00 am – Worship Service (Epiphany 2)
11:15 am – Voters & Dorcas Guild Meetings

Mon., Jan. 18: No School – Parent/Teacher Conferences

Sat., Jan. 30: 9:00 am – Work Day

Wed., Feb. 17: ASH WEDNESDAY
7:00 pm – Midweek Lenten Services Begin

Last Week's Stats: Jan. 3, 2021 Sun.: 44

Sun. Offering:	Grace:	\$1,671	CLC:	\$240
Weekly Need:	Grace:	4,000	CLC:	950
-Under / +Over:	Grace:	-2,454	CLC:	-710
GLC Other: 50	Living Faith: 120	Tuition Aid: 120		
SAF Endowment: 0	MDF: 170	Kinship: 220		
ILC Student Aid: 25	ILC Bldg. 0	IIF: 0 CEF: 0		
Current Balances:		Tuition Aid: \$2,228		

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, ...”
Acts 16:31