

Grace Lutheran Church & School



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Fridley, MN 55432



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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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Grades: Kindergarten-8th

Church Year: Advent 1

Date: December 3, 2023

✝ WORSHIP INFORMATION ✝

Hymns:

TLH 64: Jesus, Thy Church, with Longing Eyes

WS 703: Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

TLH 446: Rise, My Soul, to Watch and Pray

Communion: TLH 73

WS 702, st. 1,6-7: As Angels Joyed with One Accord

Listening assistance is available. Please ask an usher.

Worship Prep:

Psalms 24, TLH p. 128

Liturgy:

TLH, p. 15 (Communion)

Gloria: TLH 58 & 62

Scripture Readings:

Isaiah 63:16b-17, 64:1-8

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Sermon: Mark 13:32-37

³² "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ "Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. ³⁴ "It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. ³⁵ "Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming-- in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning-- ³⁶ "lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. ³⁷ "And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!" (NKJVTM)

Take Heed to Watch and Pray for Jesus' Second Coming

From the CLC President

December Letter

Have you caught the Christmas spirit yet? But what is Christmas spirit exactly? Is it being wrapped in a warm blanket, with a cup of hot chocolate in your hand, as you gaze at the tree decked out with tinsel and glowing lights? Is it the clerk behind the counter a little friendlier, a little more helpful, than at other times of the year? Is it the smell of cookies baking in the oven as you come in from the cold? Is it taking a grocery bag of food and a few toys to a needy family? Or is it like one of those Hallmark commercials designed to leave you a little misty-eyed?

You and I know true Christmas spirit is none of the above. We know that these sorts of things, though fine in themselves, give no true and lasting meaning to our lives. If we try to catch the spirit of Christmas from outward trappings and sentimental experiences, our celebration will fall flat. How often don't people wear themselves out trying to create the right holiday atmosphere only to find themselves let down because their dream of what they think Christmas should be didn't live up to expectations?

What about you and me? Yes, we know there's much more to Christmas than snow on Christmas Eve or finding our loved ones the perfect gift. Yet, if we are not careful, your Christmas and mine could fall flat as well. Tell me, are we already getting a little stressed over how extra busy we will be in the weeks ahead? (Let's see, how many sermons will we have to write and preach before the New Year rolls around?) I don't know about you, but it's happened to me that I get so busy helping God's people see the true and profound meaning of Christmas that I fail to take the time to go back in spirit to Bethlehem for myself so that I may personally breathe in the wonder of this thing which has come to pass.

We are sinners every bit as much as the people we serve. Our need to catch the true spirit of Christmas is as great as anyone else's. Like Mary, let us then, take personal time to ponder God's Indescribable Gift, a Savior born for all people. Led by the Spirit and Word let us go on bended knee into the sanctuary of the Bethlehem stable. It is cold and cruel out in the world, but here it is warm and safe. For our God is here, wrapped in swaddling clothes, come down from heaven to rescue us from the threatening perils of our sins. We are not so strong, but with Him nothing is impossible. We are not so wise, but in His Word we have true light to guide us through all the dark confusion of this present evil age. We are not worthy whatsoever to come into His presence, but He

invites us still. For He is our God of grace and mercy, and we are His dearly loved people.

The Child we worship came to die and to suffer hell itself in payment for your sins and mine. In His rising again the Third Day we see the ultimate reality of Christmas – a Savior come to our world to break the power of sin, death, and the devil over our lives once and for all.

Paul Gerhardt caught the true spirit of Christmas in these stanzas from TLH hymn #90:

*From the bondage that oppressed us, From sin's fetters that possessed us,
From the grief that sore distressed us, We, the captives, now are free.*

*Gracious Child, we pray Thee, hear us, From Thy lowly manger cheer us,
Gently lead us and be near us Till we join the angelic choir.*

May the Christmas Gospel give you all a spirit of awe and wonder as we kneel together in humble faith before Christ's manger bed. In the weeks ahead may the Spirit bless your Gospel preaching to God's glory and for the edifying of His blood-bought people.

Grace and Peace in the Name of our Newborn Savior,
Pastor Michael Wilke, CLC President

The Next Big Thing

In its rush to get to the next big thing, the world misses the truly big thing God says is coming. Enoch spoke of it early in the Old Testament: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone" (Jude 14). Jesus says that all people "will see the Son of Man coming on a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke 21:27). No future event is greater. Jesus will come in His glory, judge all people, and bring the present creation to a fiery end.

The season of Advent is a time to get ready for Jesus, not just as the Baby of Bethlehem, but as the Lord of all. While we look forward to Christmas, the Lord's coming on the last day is an even bigger event to anticipate. It will mean finally receiving and enjoying everything Jesus earned for us on the cross. He will wipe away every tear from our eyes, raise us with glorified bodies, and welcome us into the wonders of eternal life in heaven.

That day could arrive at any moment. Now is the time to get ready. "Now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). May the Holy Spirit, through your reading and meditation on the Word, bless you throughout this coming Advent season.

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Christmas Season Worship Schedule

Midweek Advent Services:

Wed., Dec. 6 – 7:00 pm

Wed., Dec. 13 – 7:00 pm

“From the Paradise of Eden to the Paradise of Heaven.”

Special meditations to prepare for the coming of the Christ Child.

From the Paradise of Eden



To the Paradise of Heaven

Candlelight Service:

Wed., Dec. 20 – 7:00 pm

A service of readings & hymns along with the lighting of candles to celebrate the light of Christ's rule in our hearts.

Preceded by Congregational Christmas Meal @ 6:00 pm

Christmas Eve Service:

Sun., Dec. 24 – 6:00 pm

“Paradise: Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained.”

A service in which the children present the timeless and treasured Christmas message.

Christmas Day Service:

Mon., Dec. 25 – 10:00 am

A service in which we ponder the fulfillment of Christ being born as True Man and True God in order to bring us salvation.

**FROM THE PARADISE OF EDEN
TO THE PARADISE OF HEAVEN**

✝ **THE ANNOUNCEMENTS** ✝

- ➔ **Hospitality:** Please note that there will be regular hospitality (instead of luncheons) on December 3, 10, and 17.
- ➔ **Midweek Advent Worship:** This Wednesday, Dec. 6, 7 pm, begins our Midweek Advent worship services with the theme: "From the Paradise of Eden to the Paradise of Heaven." These services will focus on how the original paradise that God created was ruined by sin. And yet the LORD was merciful by immediately promising how paradise would be restored through the work of the coming Messiah. Our last one on Dec. 20 will be our annual candlelight service preceded by the congregational Christmas meal at 6 pm. Join us during this precious time of year to ponder our Savior's coming.
- ➔ **Christmas Meal:** Please join us for a fellowship meal at 6 pm prior to the Candlelight service on Dec. 20. Those attending may bring something to share. Dorcas Guild committee #1 is hosting.
- ➔ **Christmas Eve Rehearsals:** This is the rehearsal schedule:
 - Sun., Dec. 3: 11:30-1:00 pm (hospitality after worship)
 - Sun., Dec. 10: 11:30-1:00 pm (hospitality after worship)
 - Sun., Dec. 17: 11:30-1:00 pm (hospitality after worship)
 - Sun., Dec. 24: 8:45-9:45 am (please be here at 8:45 am so that we can start promptly)

December is a busy month, but please remember the importance of these rehearsals for a successful Christmas Eve service. The children have a wonderful opportunity to express the Good News of our salvation through Jesus Christ. The parents' help is greatly appreciated to make everything go well.

- ➔ **Christmas Worship:** Our Christmas Eve service will be held on Sun., Dec. 24, 6 pm with our children presenting the Christmas Gospel. The theme this year is: "Paradise: Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained." The kids are asked to be here ½ hour prior to the service so that we can take a group picture and run through things. Christmas Day worship will be held Mon., Dec. 25, 10 am. May the love of this Child be the gift you open up your heart to on Christmas Day!
- ➔ **Northtown Concert:** This year the Grace School children will be singing at the Northtown Mall on Fri., Dec. 15, 2:00 pm. They will be located at the inside-of-the-mall entrance to Best Buy. Everyone is encouraged to come attend as it is always an experience greatly appreciated. If you haven't ever come to this, you may be pleasantly surprised at how well received it is. Come support the school!



- ➔ **Among Us:** This week Pastor learned that immunotherapy treatment has been unsuccessful, leading the cancer to progress. Plans are to treat with either chemo or a med, both leading to fatigue.
- ➔ **Appreciation:** Thanks to all who contributed to decorating the church for the Advent and Christmas seasons.
- ➔ **Poinsettia** signup sheet is in the narthex by the guest book. Poinsettias are \$8 each. They will be purchased in stages throughout the Advent Season. Please see Laura Wales for payment.
- ➔ **2023 Cleaning:** Any volunteers for the remaining weeks of 2023?
- ➔ **2024 Cleaning:** The 2024 cleaning sign-up list is now posted on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall. Please consider signing up.
- ➔ **Parking Reminder:** For those members who are able, please park further away to permit those with physical impairments to be able to park closer to the church.
- ➔ **Large Print Hymnals:** As a reminder, there are three copies of The Lutheran Hymnal in large print. These are by the guest book. Feel free to use these and return at the end of the worship service.
- ➔ **From the Elders:** This time of year is when a collection is taken for our "Called Workers Gift." All such designated offerings and any loose offerings collected during December will be distributed equally among the congregation's called workers.
- ➔ **Local Special Funds:** Just to highlight a few of our local funds ...
 - 1) Liberia Fund: supports special projects related to work in Liberia
 - 2) Sanctuary Improvement Fund: supports the current sanctuary project
 - 3) Tuition Aid Fund: supports Grace students who attend Immanuel Luth. H.S.
 - 4) Living Faith Fund: supports people who are in need, particularly members
 - 5) Dorcas Guild Fund: supports projects by our women's group
- ➔ **Sunday School Teachers:** Perhaps something to consider this Christmas is extending our Sunday School teachers an expression of gratitude for what they do for our children each week.
- ➔ **Stock Donations:** The Voters of Grace have provided a process for members to donate equities to the Congregation. Anyone interested in doing this can get information from Phil Radichel. Such a donation spares the donor from being taxed on any capital gains.
- ➔ **Qualified Charitable Distribution:** For those over 70½ it may be beneficial for you to send your offerings directly from an IRA fund to the church. The advantage of this procedure is those amounts are NOT considered as income and your adjusted gross income is less. For more information see Phil Radichel or Benno Sydow.

➔ **ILC Recital:** The ILC Piano/Organ Recital will be held next Sun., Dec. 10, at 3:00 p.m. in the ILC Fieldhouse.

➔ **ILC Christmas Concert:** The choirs of Immanuel Lutheran High School, College, and Seminary will be presenting "The King in the Cradle: A Choral Christmas Service," Dec. 15, 7:30 pm at Messiah Lutheran Church, 2015 N Hastings Way, Eau Claire, WI. The service will include anthems, hymns, and Scripture devotions. Worshipers will be led to celebrate Jesus, the "King in the Cradle," as King Incarnate, King of Glory, King of Love, King Returning, and King of Kings. The band and flute choir will present several songs prior to the choral service.

➔ **Sunday School Memory Work:** Christmas Eve Individual Parts

Last Week's Stats: Nov. 26, 2023 Sun.: 66 S.S.: 9 B.Cl.: 37

Sun. Offering:	Grace:	\$3,256	CLC:	\$1,440			
Weekly Need (est.):	Grace:	4,800	CLC:	1,080			
-Under / +Over:	Grace:	-1,544	CLC:	+360			
Year-to-Date Offering:	Grace:	\$230,873	CLC:	\$51,702			
Year-to-Date Need (est.):	Grace:	230,400	CLC:	51,840			
Year-to-Date (+/-)	Grace:	+473	CLC:	-138			
GLC Other:	54	Living Faith:	0	Tuition Aid:	50	Sanctuary:	250
SAF Endowment:	0	MDF:	0	Kinship:	135	EduK8:	0
ILC Student Aid:	50	ILC Bldg.	0	IIF:	0	CEF:	0
Current Balances:	Tuition Aid:		\$1,447	Sanctuary:		\$-4,130	

The following is the nomination slate for 2024:

- Treasurer: Brian Bergstrom, Dale Enns
- Elder: Frank Radichel, Dave Rust
- Education: Pat Paplow
- Trustee: Daniel Hein, Pat Paplow, Jeff Stifter
- Delegates: Tom Graham, Bill Rust, Dave Rust, Benno Sydow
- Key Executives: Rick Nelson, Bill Rust, New Treasurer

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 Pastor Hein. He would be delighted to visit with you!

✝ TODAY AT GRACE ✝

Organist: Sue Nelson

Elder: Eli Wales

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

Counting Team 1: Dale Enns; Larry Nelson; Ryan Oman; Pat
Paplow; Phil Radichel

Hospitality Team 4: Bonnie Baker; Kevin & Sandy Hulke;
Jenny Kleifgen; Pat & Dawn Paplow

Church Cleaners: Sydow

School: Oman

✝ NEXT WEEK AT GRACE ✝

Ushers: Eli Wales; Alex Baker; Kevin Baker; Dan Kelley; Dan Degnan;
David Hein; Ryan Oman; Uriah Wales; Bob Vandever

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

Hospitality Team 1: D. & C. Degnan; Larry Nelson; Barb Sydow

Church Cleaners: Sydow

School: Rinne

✝ OUR SCHEDULE ✝

- Sun., Dec. 3:** 8:30 am – Choir Practice
9:00 am – Bible Class and Sunday School
10:00 am – Worship Service w/Lord's Supper (Advent 1)
11:00 am – Hospitality
11:30-1:00 pm – Christmas Eve Rehearsal
- Wed., Dec. 6:** 4:30-6:15 pm – Catechism for Public School Students
7:00 pm – Midweek Advent Worship
- Sun., Dec. 10:** 8:30 am – Choir Practice
9:00 am – Bible Class and Sunday School
10:00 am – Worship Service (Advent 2)
11:00 am – Hospitality
11:30-1:00 pm – Christmas Eve Rehearsal
3:00 pm – ILC Piano & Organ Concert (Eau Claire, WI)
- Wed., Dec. 13:** 4:30-6:15 pm – Catechism for Public School Students
7:00 pm – Midweek Advent Worship Service
- Fri., Dec. 15:** 2:00 pm – Grace School Concert at Northtown Mall
7:30 pm – ILC Christmas Concert (Messiah – Eau Claire, WI)
- Sun., Dec. 17:** 9:00 am – Bible Class and Sunday School
10:00 am – Worship Service (Advent 3)
11:00 am – Hospitality
11:30-1:00 pm – Christmas Eve Rehearsal
12:00 pm – Council Meeting
- Wed., Dec. 20:** 6:00 pm – Congregational Christmas Meal (Host: Committee #1)
7:00 pm – Candlelight Worship Service
- Fri., Dec 22:** Grace School Christmas Party & Christmas Break Begins
- Sun., Dec. 24:** 8:45 am – Christmas Eve Rehearsal
9:00 am – Bible Class
10:00 am – Worship (Advent 4)
6:00 pm – Christmas Eve Worship Service
- Mon., Dec. 25:** 10:00 am – Christmas Day Worship Service