

Grace Lutheran Church & School



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Member: CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION

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

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Grades: Kindergarten-8th

Church Year: Advent 2

Date: December 10, 2023

✝ WORSHIP INFORMATION ✝

Hymns:

TLH 75: Ye Sons of Men, Oh, Hearken
TLH 61: Comfort, Comfort, Ye My People
WS 701: Prepare the Royal Highway
WS 713: Your Little Ones, Dear Lord, Are We
Listening assistance is available. Please ask an usher.

Worship Prep:

Psalm 85, TLH p. 140

Liturgy:

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

Scripture Readings:

2 Peter 3:8-14
Mark 1:1-8

Sermon: Isaiah 40:1-8

¹ "Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God. ² "Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, That her warfare is ended, That her iniquity is pardoned; For she has received from the LORD's hand Double for all her sins." ³ The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be exalted And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough places smooth; ⁵ The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, And all flesh shall see *it* together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken." ⁶ The voice said, "Cry out!" And he said, "What shall I cry?" "All flesh *is* grass, And all its loveliness *is* like the flower of the field. ⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades, Because the breath of the LORD blows upon it; Surely the people *are* grass. ⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever." (NKJVTM)

Prepare the Royal Highway

Through the cut of the Law
Through the fill of the Gospel

CLC E-Devotion - December 4, 2023

Matthew 3:2 Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.

The Missing Piece

In thinking about judgment day, have you wondered about these words of Jesus: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven ... Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"? (Matthew 7:21-23).

What's missing? If someone says they believe in Jesus, talk about Him, and do things in His name, why would Jesus not recognize them as His followers and welcome them to heaven? And if that is the case, what confidence can we have when we stand before Him?

There is one critical, absolutely essential thing needed in preparation for meeting the Lord. It is what God sent John the Baptist to announce. That one vital piece is repentance. John preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Matthew 3:2). It didn't matter whether his hearers were respected Pharisees, rabbis, or "sinners and tax collectors," the message was the same: Repent! Turn away from your sin and pride in self. Turn to the Lord in sorrow, and trust in Him for mercy and forgiveness. Look to the Lamb of God who came to take away the sin of the world.

Are we ready for Jesus' coming? These pre-Christmas days are the time to prepare, not just by decorating the tree and humming carols, but by some serious introspection in light of what God says about our spiritual condition. To truly appreciate a Savior, we need to see how great our need is. Look in the mirror of the Ten Commandments and apply them to your life this past week. Confess with David in Psalm 38:4: "My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear."

Then remember John's call, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near." The kingdom is Jesus' gracious rule in the hearts of those who look to Him for forgiveness. His coming brings the comfort the Lord announced through Isaiah. "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins" (Isaiah 40:1-2).

Where there is repentance, nothing is missing. Our sins have been paid for and we are clothed with the spotless robe of Jesus' righteousness. May the Lord work repentance in us today as we serve Him in love and look forward to His coming.

Repentance

The change of mind from a rebellious state to one of harmony with the will of God, from trusting in human merit to trusting in the merit of Christ. It embraces contrition, consciousness and conviction of sin, accompanied by the sorrow for it, and above all, faith, which is followed by renunciation of the former walks and habits of life and sanctification. Repentance is a total change of heart and life, its author being God Himself (Jer. 31:18 f.; Acts 26:29; 5:31). The means to repentance is the Word of God. (Lutheran Cyclopedia).

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*** ✝

➔ **Midweek Advent Worship:** This Wednesday, Dec. 13, 7 pm, continues 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 Wed., Dec. 20. Those attending may bring something to share. Dorcas Guild committee #1 is hosting.

➔ **Christmas Eve Rehearsals:** This is the remaining rehearsal schedule:

- 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 this Fri., Dec. 15, 2 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!

➔ **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.

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



➔ **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.

➔ **Sunday School Offering:** As a reminder, every Sunday an offering is received from the children attending Sunday School. This is designated for the Kinship Fund, a fund that supports orphan children in some of the areas the CLC does mission work.



➔ **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 today at 3:00 pm 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," this Friday, Dec. 15, 7:30 pm CST at Messiah Lutheran Church, 2015 N Hastings Way, Eau Claire, WI. The service will include anthems, hymns, and Scripture devotions. The band and flute choir will present several songs prior to the choral service. The service will be live-streamed and recorded. The stream will be accessible via youtube.com/ilcvideos and ilc.edu/tv.
- ➔ **Walk with the Apostle Paul:** A group trip to Greece and Turkey is planned for May 27-June 5, 2024 with a possible three day extension to Rome for those who are interested. The trip will include visits to Athens, Corinth, Berea, Thessaloniki, Philippi, Ephesus and much more. It will include visits to the traditional sites of many of the cities and churches the Apostle Paul visited as recorded in the Book of Acts. The extension to Rome will include visits to the Sistine Chapel, Basilica of St. Peter, Catacombs, Colosseum, St. Paul's Church, and more. A video of a similar trip can be seen here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ul-o6E47MMw. If you would like more info. about this trip, please contact Nathanael Mayhew (nnmayhew@sleepyeyelutheran.com). Brochures are available upon request.
- ➔ **Cyclone in India:** From Missionary Peter Evensen: Please keep our brothers and sisters in Southern India (BELC) in your prayers. The area is being hit by a hurricane (called a cyclone there) and flooding. This has caused damage to church roofs, members and pastor's houses. Many have had to evacuate and stay in temporary shelters. One of the chairmen who lives near the MLBS (BELC seminary) had to evacuate his house and he and his family are staying in the BELC office.



➔ **Flooding in Tanzania:** From Missionary Bruce Naumann: There have been international reports about severe flooding and loss of life in northern Tanzania. I've been in the U. S. for a little over a week. *Contrary to initial reports*, TCLC members have suffered losses from flooding and mudslides in northern Tanzania. Pastor Jeremia reports: "68 people have died and 1500 have lost their houses. It's around the area of our members of Mbulu; 20 people of our members have been affected ... Nobody of TCLC lost their lives but they are in critical condition of food and other needs like blanket tent and so on ..." Please remember these displaced Christians in prayer. We appeal to our gracious God for His help and care for them, along with other emergencies that are severe burdens to our overseas brothers and sisters - the earthquake in Nepal, the typhoon in India, and persecution in Myanmar. I expect that we'll be hearing about these critical needs soon from our Board of Missions.



- ➔ **Among Us:** Tom Graham will be having surgery this Thursday to increase circulation in his legs. May Jesus grant him needed healing.
- ➔ **CLC News:** Teacher Michaela Winters, lower grade teacher at Messiah Lutheran in Hales Corners, WI, is resigning at the conclusion of the current school year to spend more time with her infant daughter.
- ➔ **Sunday School Memory Work:** Christmas Eve Group Parts

Last Week's Stats: Dec. 3, 2023 Sun.: 66 S.S.: 9 B.Cl.: 37 Wed.: 39					
Sun. Offering:	Grace:	\$3,244	CLC:	\$305	
Wed. Offering:	Grace:	\$655	CLC:	\$90	
Weekly Need (est.):	Grace:	4,800	CLC:	1,080	
-Under / +Over:	Grace:	-901	CLC:	-685	
Year-to-Date Offering:	Grace:	\$234,772	CLC:	\$52,097	
Year-to-Date Need (est.):	Grace:	235,200	CLC:	52,920	
Year-to-Date (+/-)	Grace:	-428	CLC:	-823	
GLC Other:	905	Living Faith:	0	Tuition Aid:	50 Sanctuary: 0
SAF Endowment:	0	MDF:	300	Kinship:	225 EduK8: 0
ILC Student Aid:	50	ILC Bldg.	0	IIF:	0 CEF: 0
Current Balances:		Tuition Aid:	\$1,497	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

✠ TODAY AT GRACE ✠

Organist: Maureen Ochsner *Elder:* Eli Wales

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

✠ 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 3: Duane Enns; Tom Graham; Kevin Hulke;
Dan Degnan; Benno Sydow

Hospitality Team 2: Theresa Aymond; Rachelle Kanneh;
Heidi Nelson; Bob & Suki Vandever

Church Cleaners: Volunteers? *School:* Rinne

✠ OUR SCHEDULE ✠

- 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:** **ADVENT 4 / CHRISTMAS EVE**
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:** **CHRISTMAS DAY**
10:00 am – Christmas Day Worship Service