

GRACE NOTES

DECEMBER 2025 ISSUE 83-12



Dear Friends,

Time can be weird. As I look at the leaves in my yard and prepare to go on vacation it's strange to think, seven months ago I was in Ireland. This will be my second winter in this house. There are only five Sundays until Christmas! I often don't feel like I'm waiting for time to pass but trying to catch up as time speeds by.

I wonder how the early church felt about the speed of time as they waited for Jesus to come again, after his resurrection. Many thought it would happen in their lifetimes. Even though Jesus said we wouldn't know the time or place, he also proclaimed the kingdom of God has drawn near. There was a sense of immediacy and urgency. So, they waited and then waited some more. A few even

decided to let loose, stop working, and live life to the fullest because there wasn't much time left. Only Jesus didn't come.

Centuries later, we still live in this liminal space between Jesus' lifetime and waiting for him to come again. Although, how many of us really are waiting with the expectation that Jesus will show up in our lifetimes?

Since the fifth century we have recognized the season of Advent with themes of watchfulness, preparation and hope. Advent in Latin means "to come." We celebrate and wait for the coming of Christ, both in the Christ child and in the final coming of Christ.

The thought of waiting in Advent, today, might look like a child marking the days on a calendar till you get to the main event. For them, each day can feel like a lifetime. There are likely people, often adults, who can't wait for the season to be done. While these four weeks may be enjoyable, it can also be lonely and stressful.

For all the waiting we do, how many of us are waiting with anticipation for the final coming of Christ? If I took a poll, within our tradition and congregation, I would guess the majority would expect to pass away before

Jesus' second coming. So, what does it look like to wait in Advent when people have been waiting for generations? Yearning for a time when peace, justice, and joy abound. Witnessing the way the world cries out for healing.

In Advent we acknowledge the challenge and tension that comes with waiting; like parents who prepare a nursery, someone waiting for a response to their job application, or waiting to see if you might get on a trial medication. We have nearly no control over the outcome and timeline. Still, while we wait, we aren't static or stuck. We watch for signs, seek more information and do all we can to prepare.

Likewise, people of faith, we don't stay still. We ask how we can help those in need till the season of waiting is done. We retell God's story in worship and at home. Fostering moments for hope, peace, joy, and love in the Advent wreath. We light candles in the darkness, reminding each other of the light that came years ago. The light that cannot be extinguished.

God's Peace
Pastor Stephanie

Stewardship Update

Thank you! We have received 73 Statements of Intent. Of those pledges, 37 have increased their giving by a total of \$16,144. That is wonderful! Together we are a chorus of generosity. We are halfway to our goal, at \$312 a week. With your support, we will continue to serve God and our neighbor. If you haven't already, please bring or mail in the pledge form that was mailed to you (or pick one up at church), or pledge online with our secure form at bit.ly/GLCPledge2026.



Christmas Carols at Luther Manor



Thursday, December 11 | 1:00pm

Join Luther Manor Residents (3118 Devils Glen Rd, Bettendorf) for a Christmas Hymn sing at 1:00pm. All are welcome!

Candles & Carols

Sunday, December 14 | 6:30pm

You are invited to an evening of reading and song. The beautiful service of Candles and Carols is a lovely evening of anthems, hymns, scripture and prayers that are sure to uplift your spirit as you travel through the seasons of Advent and Christmas. Come relax and enjoy, as we reflect upon and treasure God's holy gift of Jesus.



Advent Worship

November 30, December 7, 14
8:30am and 10:30am

Candles & Carols

Sunday, December 14 | 6:30pm

Blue Christmas

Saturday, December 20 | 7:00pm
(at Redeemer Lutheran Church)

Children's Program

Sunday, December 21
9:30am Joint Worship

Christmas Eve

Wednesday, December 24 | 5:00pm
(Family Friendly)

Christmas Eve

Wednesday, December 24 | 7:00pm
(Traditional)

Christmas Hymn-Sing

Sunday, December 28
9:30am Joint Worship

Blue Christmas

A Service of Night Prayer for the Winter Solstice
@ Redeemer Lutheran Church 1107 Tanglefoot Lane, Bettendorf

Saturday, December 20 | 7:00pm

This reflective gathering offers a supportive space for quiet reflection, solace, and a gentle reminder of comfort and hope during the Advent season.



Grace Lutheran Church † Davenport, IA

JUNIOR BIBLE STUDY

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM!

Sunday, December 21 | 9:30am Joint Worship

Join us for a Christmas Cookie Party following the service!

Grief Support

Next Meetings: Dec 3 & 17

The Grief Support Group meets the first Wednesday and third Wednesdays, (first Wednesdays only in June, July, and August) 5:30pm in Pat Bell Hall. Please join us! Anyone is welcome at anytime, and please be assured our conversations are kept in confidence.

Questions? Cindy Lee 563-370-5386.

Centering Prayer

Mondays 4:30pm via Zoom (excluding holidays)

In the Christian tradition, Contemplative Prayer is considered to be the pure gift of God. It is the opening of mind and heart--our whole being to God, the Ultimate Mystery, beyond thoughts, words, and emotions. With grace we open our awareness to God whom we know by faith is within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than choosing; closer than consciousness itself.

Centering Prayer is a method designed to facilitate the development of Contemplative Prayer by preparing our faculties to receive this gift.

Cheryl Kritsch is the facilitator. Periodically the group will meet in person in the Grace Church Choir Room providing the ZOOM option, as well. Please contact Cheryl 563-343-0135 with any questions and to verify the location (zoom or in person).

Click [HERE](#) to enter Zoom for Centering Prayer.
Meeting ID: 392 407 7028
Passcode: 2020



Page Turners

Sat, December 20, 8:30am

Come join the Saturday Morning Page Turner's Club! We meet at 8:30am the third Saturday each month at different locations for breakfast, book discussion, and great fellowship. (Haven't read the book? No worries, Join us anyways!) **December Book:** [Little Pink House: A True Story of Defiance and Courage](#) by Jeff Benedict **Host:** Gloria Lange 563-271-1542 **Location:** The Brothers Restaurant (1718 ~ 2nd Ave, Rapids City, IL)

Altar Guild Opportunities

A very important part of our worship experience relies on members to prepare communion, set the altar table, and manage worship supplies like candles and wine. Please consider signing up to help with altar guild in 2026 - you can serve for two weeks or one month at a time. A sign-up sheet is on a clipboard in the narthex. This is a wonderful way to support worship here at Grace and is a great "behind-the-scenes" job if you prefer not to be in the spotlight. Contact the church office with any questions.

Worship Volunteers Needed

Would you like to help with worship? We have a variety of duties that support worship here at Grace, some very easy, some with a bit more responsibility, all important to the worship experience - contact the church office for more information:

Acolyte light/extinguish candles (8:30am)

Crucifer carry in/carry out the Cross (8:30am)

Ushers hand out bulletins, count attendance, be available for anyone needing assistance during services, pass offering plates (8:30 only)

Greeters greet worshippers as they arrive (both services)

Assisting Ministers assist the pastor with portions of the service. Your reading parts are sent to you ahead of time (both services)

Communion Assistant serve wine or collect cups (both services)

Communion Bread make communion bread, recipe provided

Sound System run the sound system and monitor it during worship

Make Coffee keep the coffee flowing on Sunday mornings between services

Bring Treats or Healthy Snacks supply our coffee hour treats & healthy snacks between services

Write Prayers write prayer petitions used during the Prayers of the People. Pr Stephanie & Pr Kirsten would be glad to assist you in learning how these are created.



Council Corner

- A joint worship service was approved for December 21, at 9:30am for the children's program.
- Council received an update on the stewardship campaign. Over half of those pledging increased their giving. Finance will meet December 10, to draft the 2026 budget.
- Coffee Conversations on the two Sundays prior to the Annual Meeting will be set aside for conversations with church council members and Dawn Matthews our treasurer.
- Dawn reported that the last of the endowment transfers should be completed this week.
- Distribution of endowment money was discussed. Council will approve a formal plan in Dec. One strategy suggested was to create a fund for committees, groups, or individuals to apply for funding for special projects or events.



Women of the **EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

Naomi Circle



Next Gathering: **December 9, 11:30am***

*Note Date & Time Change. **Christmas Luncheon at The Outing Club** (2109 N Brady St, Davenport) **RSVP to Ann Lorentzen** 563-349-0208 or lorentzen12@icloud.com. The remainder of the year Naomi Circle meets the third Tuesday of the month Sept-May for refreshments, fellowship, devotions, and bible study. All are welcome to join us! Questions? Joyce Marinaccio gsgopher50@gmail.com or 563-343-3404.



Grace2Dine

Friday, December 12, Noon | Hickory Garden Restaurant (3311 Hickory Grove Rd, Davenport)

Grace2Dine meets monthly to dine out enjoying wonderful fellowship and food. Please think about joining us! Questions? Contact the church office office@gracewelcomesyou.org.

Social Ministry Mitten Tree



The Grace Social Ministry Team is collecting hats and gloves (all sizes) for our local elementary schools. These items can be new or very gently used, should be unwrapped, and can be placed on or under the tree in the narthex. Thank you for helping with this important ministry!



Service Day Quilters



Next Meeting Dates: **December 9 & 10**

The quilters meet the second Tuesday & second Wednesday 9am-Noon each month. The quilts made are donated to the community and Lutheran World Relief. In recent years we have made LWR school bags. Questions? Contact Gloria Lange 563-271-1542 or langejg1@msn.com or Kathy Miller kathyk1679@aol.com or 563-676-0914.

Fair Trade

Excellent Christmas Gifts!

We will have chocolate bars, hot cocoa mix, coffee, tea, and more available for purchase in December. REMEMBER: these are all organically grown, ethically sourced, and fairly traded products from farmers and worker co-ops around the world. By purchasing Fair Trade products you are promoting honest and fair business practices that empower both farmers and consumers. For more information or to purchase any of their additional products for yourself go to shop.equalexchange.coop.





Davenport Fall Festival

Davenport Fall Festival Freight House Market

During the first weekend in November, Grace Lutheran joined Zion, St. Mark, St. James, and Trinity at Davenport's Fall Festival. We joined together to sell handmade items, share food pantry and hot meal resources, and provide information about our churches. Collectively, we raised \$668. Grace sold a few adult-sized quilts and one child-sized quilt. Through those sales, Grace raised \$205. The quilting group shared this money with a new church project called The Green Bag Project. This project provides eight families who attend Garfield Elementary with a bag of food every weekend. This money will be used to purchase food for this project.

Give Thanks Brunch

Thank you to all who brought brunch goodies - we had a lovely time celebrating God's grace and generosity.



Thank you to the volunteers who shared smiles and friendly conversation at The Fall Festival. Thank you to the WELCA quilting group who made and shared beautiful quilts, as well as shared the proceeds from the quilts. Through each of these steps, God's grace is shared.



Men's Lunch & Conversation

Men's "Lunch & Conversation" meets every Wednesday at Noon at church. You can bring a lunch from home or pick something up from a local restaurant. Questions? Contact Dennis Boehme at 563-320-2661 or boehmed@aol.com.

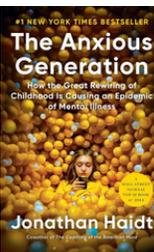
Story of Paul Bible Study

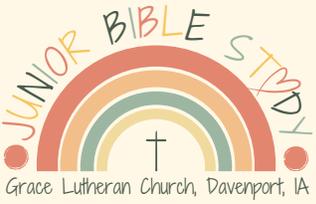
Led by Pastor Stephanie | We are on hiatus for December, classes resume in January

Discover how Paul went from someone who persecuted Christians to being a significant early church leader. Please contact the office at office@gracewelcomesyou.org or 563-322-0769 if you are interested. There is a participant book with only a few pages of reading for each session.

Book Study: The Anxious Generation

The Anxious Generation studies the epidemic of teen mental illness, including why children need play and independent exploration to mature into thriving adults. Anyone is welcome at anytime - this study is open to the community, so please invite your friends and family! **We are meeting on various Tuesdays - please contact Pastor Kirsten for the next meeting date.**





Junior Bible Study is offered for children after the children's sermon during worship at both services. We will return from our time together before communion begins. Once again, we will use The Story as our guide for our learning. We will read the stories of Abraham, Moses, and Joseph. We will learn alongside these characters to trust in God, listen to God, and practice forgiveness. We would love for your children or grandchildren to join us!

School Partnership

Thank you to all who contributed toward the Garfield Elementary Thanksgiving boxes for the third year in a row! Because of your generosity and collaboration, we were able to provide 13 boxes of food, which will feed 62 people. This is an increase of six families and 23 people from last year.

Through this contribution and the donations from the congregation, we provided each family with a turkey, a pie, and ingredients to make the traditional side dishes. Thank you to Cindy Lee, who helped box the food and helped as the families came to pick up the food. God's grace is enough, and because of that promise, you are enough. Every time we trust in that promise and share that grace, God's Good News is experienced. Look at what we can do when we work together!



November Pray and Play

This past November we had 18 kids who learned how we can be compassionate to our neighbors. Thank you to Mercy One Genesis for letting us use their green space for games and sidewalk chalk.

We read and acted out The Good Samaritan and practiced compassion by filling food bags for our neighbors at Garfield Elementary. Thanks to our volunteers and small group leaders who made the day a safe experience for all.



DECEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 8:30am-4pm Pray & Play 10:30am Staff Meeting 4:30pm Centering Prayer	2 10am Pastor's Text Study 5:00pm Property Mtg	3 12pm Men's Lunch Group 3:30pm Nominating Committee Meeting 5:30pm Grief Support Grp 7pm Choir Rehearsal	4 9am Grace Visitors 11am Prayer Group	5	6 1pm Praise Band Practice
Pr Stephanie Vacation →						
7 Food Pantry Sunday 8:30am Traditional Worship 9:30am Coffee Hour 10:30am Contemp. Worship	8 10:30am Staff Meeting 4:30pm Centering Prayer 5:00pm Sweet Arts Christmas Party	9 9am Quilters 10am Pastor's Text Study 11am Naomi Circle 1:30pm Social Ministry Mtg 2:30pm Outreach Mtg 3:00pm Personnel Mtg 6pm CYF Mtg 7pm Worship Mtg	10 9am Quilters 12pm Men's Lunch Group 6pm Conf at St. James 6pm Finance Mtg 7pm Choir Rehearsal	11 1pm Luther Manor Christmas Carols 	12 12pm Grace2Dine	13 1pm Praise Band Practice
14 Stewardship Sunday 8:30am Traditional Worship 9:30am Coffee Hour 10:30am Contemp. Worship 2-4pm Sherry McCarty Birthday Party	15 10:30am Staff Meeting 4:30pm Centering Prayer	16 10am Pastor's Text Study	17 12pm Men's Lunch Group 5:30pm Grief Support Grp 7pm Choir Rehearsal	18	19 11am Council Reports Due	20 1pm Praise Band Practice
21 9:30am Children's Christmas Program 10:30am Christmas Cookie Party 	22 10:30am Staff Meeting 4:30pm Centering Prayer 7pm Council Meeting	23 10am Pastor's Text Study	24 Christmas Eve Office Closes at Noon  5pm Family Christmas Eve 7pm Traditional Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day Office Closed 	26 Office Closed	27 1pm Praise Band Practice
		Pr Kirsten Vacation thru Jan 3 →				
28 9:30am Christmas Hymn Sing Joint Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour	29 10:30am Staff Meeting 4:30pm Centering Prayer Pr Stephanie Vacation →	30 10am Pastor's Text Study	31 12pm Men's Lunch Group	Jan 1 New Year's Day Office Closed 	Jan 2 Office Closed	Jan 3 1pm Praise Band Practice
Pr Kirsten Vacation thru Jan 3 →						

Thanks to My Grace Family!
I want to thank my Grace Family for all the prayers, cards, visits and kindness expressed during the past weeks. I especially want to thank Pastor Stephanie for all of her visits and contacts. Little did I know that I would be hospitalized twice but I am now on the mend and doing well. Your acts of kindness have meant so much to me and to my special nurse Jane! Thanks so much and God's blessings to all.
~Ken Krumwiede

Thank you

- 2 Tina Katzenburger
- 7 Nancy Boehme
- 9 Jackie Cain
- 10 Hollie Swain
- 11 Jenny Krzmarzick
- 12 Pastor Stephanie
- 14 Camila Carter
- 17 Carlin Peterson
- 18 Gloria Lange
- 19 Michael Kirby
- 20 Muriel Anderson
- 20 Tayvia Kirk
- 21 Evelyn Peterson
- 26 Dennis Kritsch
- 27 Sue Cruchelow
- 28 Ray Pacha



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Office Hours
Mon-Thur 8:30am-3pm
Fridays 8:30am-Noon

ADMIN STAFF

Pastor Stephanie Wood
pastorstephanie@gracewelcomesyou.org

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Vey Rodriguez, Worship Tech
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MUSIC STAFF

Sally Meier - Adult Choir Director
Kathi Parrish - Accompanist
Susan Senn - Organist
Vey Rodriguez - Praise Band Leader

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Paul Lewellan President
Deb Gustafson Vice-President
Janice Gibbs Secretary
Dawn Matthews Treasurer
Jackie Cain
Lori Haugen
Laura Toland
Gail Walton

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End-of-Year Giving

All year-end offerings (including Required Minimum Distributions from retirement accounts) need to be **received in the office by Monday, December 30**, in order to be deposited on December 31, and counted for 2025. Thank you for your continued support of our missions!

Annual Reports Due January 5

Annual Reports are due to the office no later than **Monday, January 5**, to have time to prepare for distribution on January 11 (two weeks before the annual meeting). They can be sent anytime before and up to January 5, in any format convenient for you, as they will be reformatted for consistency. Please email office@gracewelcomesyou.org with any questions.



Thank you to all who generously donated to the NAMI Walk this year. Our Grace/St. Mark's team raised \$906! United by our unique experiences, journeys and stories, NAMIWalks is a beautiful and meaningful celebration of each of us, and continues to move closer to the goal of "Mental Health for All"!

Food Pantry Weekend

Our next Food Pantry Collection is Sunday, December 7

Bring your non-perishable food donations in a bag, and leave at the altar before the service. **Let's make this our best year yet!** Go to localfoodbank.org/what-do-food-banks-need-but-dont-ask-for/ for info about if you need ideas.

Donations Needed: nonperishables - especially canned fruits and vegetables, canned & dry beans, canned meats, pasta, pasta sauce, rice, breakfast items (cereal, oatmeal, etc.)

Always Appreciated: peanut butter, jelly/jam, canned chili, boxed potatoes, protein bars, whole grain bread, fresh fruits & vegetables (donated directly to the pantry), items for baking (flour, sugar, baking soda, baking powder, etc.)

Consider: simple spices (salt, pepper, garlic powder, onion powder, etc.), neutral cooking oils, vinegars, powdered milk, powdered eggs, wooden spoons, hand-held can openers, aluminum foil pans, cake mixes for special occasions

