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DECEMBER 2021

# Grace Notes

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

310 West Lorain Street,  
Oberlin, OH. 44074  
440-775-3271

Pastor Josh Moldenhauer  
Graceoberlinpastor@gmail.com

[www.gracechurchoberlin.wordpress.com](http://www.gracechurchoberlin.wordpress.com)

*“Grace Lutheran Church is a family united by faith in Christ,  
which seeks to grow in that faith and to share it with others.”*

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## From the Pastor’s Desk . . .

Recently while reading through the first few chapters of the book of **Luke**, I was struck by how often it references **emotions**. There is joy and fear, weeping and anger, confusion and understanding, anticipation and uncertainty. What God is doing stirs up all these emotions – to name just a few. And all this is not accidental to the story or the Gospel. God works on peoples’ **hearts** in many ways to do a variety of things. In fact, I was surprised how often the word “*heart*” is mentioned in these chapters. God cares A LOT about what’s going on in peoples’ hearts. That’s just the part that John the Baptist (to a lesser extent) and Jesus (to a greater extent) will be zeroing in on.

We’re currently in the **Advent season** – that part of the Church Year all about preparation for Christmas. Advent began on November 28<sup>th</sup> – but it also begins a new cycle of the Church Year – one in which the Gospel of Luke will be read almost every Sunday for the next 12 months. Our Advent series this year is titled “*God Prepares Hearts for Christ’s Coming.*” Just like Luke’s Gospel, it’s going to zero in on what God is doing inside of people – in the Bible stories and in us. You are encouraged to join us, as we prepare to join in singing “*Joy to the world, the Lord is come!*” by first following the songwriter’s admonition, “*Let earth receive her King; let ev’ry heart prepare Him room...*”

In Christ,

Pastor Josh

PS During Advent this year we will resume having midweek services at 7 pm on Wednesdays, but without any Soup or Sandwich Suppers beforehand.

PPS By now each household should have received an **Advent devotional**. There were 4 different kinds – each with a specific emphasis and theme. Let me encourage you to make those part of your daily pre-Christmas tradition. Daily devotions during Advent are a great way to bring the family together to start or end the day with a focus on God and His work among us.

**November Official Pastoral Acts:**

- 4 circuit visitor activities
- 3 shut-in visits
- 1 private communion
- 4 pastoral care visits
- 7 leadership meetings
- 2 funerals

*(Marybelle Brubaker and Verna Bremke)*

<b>Upcoming Sermon Texts</b>	
Dec. 5	Luke 1:26-38
Dec. 12	Luke 1:39-52
Dec. 19	Luke 1:56-66
Dec. 24	Luke 2:1-19
Dec. 26	Luke 2:22-40

## Worship Information

Our church pandemic protocols put into place last month will continue this month.

Pastor offers **Private Communion** at church the first Wednesday of the month from 1:00-2:30 pm OR by private appointment. People can contact Pastor ahead of time to “reserve” a time, but “drop-ins” are also welcome. Contact Pastor if you’d prefer a home visit with private communion.

If you or someone you know would like to receive a mailed hard copy of each Sunday’s sermon, please contact Pastor Josh to be added to that mailing list.

## November Voters’ Meeting Recap

The November Voter’s Meeting was held November 21, 2021. There were 19 members present. Buildings & Grounds has been very busy with 17 items to report. Needless to say, there have been changes made here at Grace. If you can’t see them, be sure to look over the Voters’ Meeting minutes posted on the bulletin. If you haven’t received the minutes via email or snail mail, be sure to let Pastor or Lee Anne know to add you to one of the mailing lists. The operating budget for 2022 was approved. We have a new Council President, Tom Monroe and new Evangelism Deacon, Susan Walker to start us off in the new year. The Memorial Committee and Memorial Fund have both been dissolved. This leaves a direct line to Council for all purchases. The next Voters’ Meeting is scheduled for February 20, 2022 after church services. Let’s have a big turn out and try to get things closer to normal after these last trying 18 months.

Respectfully,

Lee Anne Christner, Recording Secretary

## President's Message

The November, 2021 quarterly meeting of the Church Council with other members of Grace (total of 19 present) has concluded with the 2 most significant RESULTS being the lingering operating deficit to continue in CY2022 and the dissolution of the Memorial Committee/Fund. Perhaps the incoming Church Council will address this latter transfer of responsibility from a Committee to the Council at the February assembly. The minutes of the gathering will be posted on the hall bulletin board by Mrs. Christner shortly. It behooves each of you who didn't attend the Voters' Assembly to read the posted minutes.

Should you have a New Year's resolution to share with Grace Lutheran Church, may I suggest becoming a Sunday Offering Counter or becoming a member of the Board of Elders helping Pastor Joshua to get those inactive members to return to Grace? For the former: Bonnie, Lisa, Glen, and I currently do the "heavy lifting" and another hand---or two---would be welcomed. However, the most needed addition would be, in my opinion, another Grace Elder or three. From July-October 2021, Sunday's Communicants ranged from 14-33. Everything can't possibly be blamed on COVID-19! I'll say no more! Finally, on behalf of the Grace Church Council, I wish all of you a "Merry Christmas" and the New Year 2022 filled with love, happiness, and good health.

Fred C. Feddeck

Quote of the Month: *"I was going to quit all my bad habits for the New Year, but then I remembered that nobody likes a quitter"!* Unknown author

## Upcoming Church Events & Dates

- **Private Communion Service:** Wednesday, December 1<sup>st</sup> from 1:00-2:30 pm.
- **Midweek Advent Services:** Wednesday, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 pm.
- **Council Meeting:** Monday, December 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm.
- **Elder's Meeting:** Tuesday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm.
- **Christmas Eve Communion & Candlelight Service:** Friday, December 24<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm.
- **January Newsletter Articles Due:** Tuesday, January 4<sup>th</sup>

## Buildings & Grounds Update

1. Paul Castle and I replaced all the bulbs in one of the ceiling light-fixtures in the sanctuary. I noticed there were approximately 2 dozen bulbs burned out in the 15 remaining hanging light fixtures. There are 91 light bulbs in the sanctuary. I will provide quotes for bulb replacements at the next Council Meeting.
2. Super's Landscaping added topsoil around the west side of the church and at the end of the portico, relocated the Magnolia tree, grass seeded and strawed 3 locations on the church property.
3. Started and checked the operation of the church snowblower.
4. Contacted Derek Holzaski for church parking lot snow removal. Derek has plowed snow at the church previously.
5. Moved Christmas trees into the sanctuary and helped decorate.
6. Installed new batteries in the East Sanctuary thermostat.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Tom Monroe

<b><u>December Birthdays</u></b>	
Melanie Huston	12/1
Robin Jones	12/2
Megan Swanzer	12/10
Glen Fridenstine	12/11
Kim Thomas	12/13
Erin Laux	12/18
John Kristoff	12/20
Greg Christner	12/25
Rachael Koch	12/26
Ray Hines	12/30

\* If we accidentally forgot your birthday or anniversary, please tell Pastor and we'll add it to our list.

## Altar Guild Items

Thank you to all those who helped decorate the sanctuary for Christmas!  
I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Carolyn for her 30 plus years of  
service on Altar Guild. You will be missed!

The 2022 schedule has been emailed and is posted in the sacristy.

~Thank you for serving~

~ Robin ~

## GRACE 2021 Service Schedule

\*\*\*PLEASE BE RESPONSIBLE FOR A REPLACEMENT SHOULD YOU BE UNABLE TO SERVE\*\*\*

DATE	Usher	Acolyte	Greeter	Counters	Altar Guild	Lay Reader
Dec. 5th, 12th	Bob Izold	Reilly Jones	Anita Saathoff	Fred F. & Glen F.	Robin Turnbull	Anita Saathoff
Dec. 19th, 26th	Paul Castle	Carter Jones	Lisa Lalonde	Bonnie A. & Lisa L.	Kathy Knipper	Fred Feddeck
Dec. 24th	Dale Rider	David Jones	Karen F.	Fred F. & Glen F.	Kathy Knipper	Youth
Jan. 2nd	Tom Monroe	Reilly Jones	Sue Walker	Bonnie A. & Lisa L.	Karen Huston	Paul Castle

## Church Website

**Kendis Bender** has been hired as our new **website coordinator**. She is constantly looking for ways to update our website to give it a “fresh” look and get more information on it. What is MOST valued and appreciated on a website are pictures. Instead of trying to get an official “church photographer” to take a bunch of staged pictures, what she is encouraging is for individual members to **use their phones to snap a few pictures** while at church or doing church activities, and then email them to her at [graceoberlinevents@gmail.com](mailto:graceoberlinevents@gmail.com). She will do the rest. [Note, pictures involving any children will not be placed on the website without their parent’s consent.]

There’s also been a big fluctuation in the amount of people viewing our church website and Facebook page over the past few months. Kendis and Pastor intend to make every effort to have the Sunday worship videos posted on both the website and Facebook page by **3 pm** (if not earlier) on the same day, as well as 9 pm for evening services.

If anyone has any comments about any of this – or suggestions about how to improve our church’s website – please share them by using the above email address or talking with Pastor.

## Socks for Flocks

Again, this year our congregation will be participating in the Socks for Flocks program. It starts in November 1<sup>st</sup> and runs through Super Bowl weekend. There will be a big box in the narthex in which we will be collecting socks, hats, coats, etc. for the less fortunate in the Cleveland area. They will be given and distributed by the **Redeemer Crises Center in Cleveland**. If you have any questions contact Pastor Josh

## LWL Updates

To everyone who helped with the funeral dinner for Verna Bremke, THANK YOU very much. This was the largest dinner to date and we had plenty of delicious food prepared by our ladies. A special thanks goes to Pastor Josh, Karen Houston and Jan Koepf for helping set up. A really big thank you to Karen Fridenstine, Jen Jones, Kathy Knipper and Donna Perron who worked all day serving and cleaning up. The Bremke family was very grateful.

Thank you,  
Bonnie

A quick reminder to all, we have a box in the Narthex for Socks for Flocks as well as our Mitten Tree. Please help us make this a warmer winter for all the people in need. I want to mention that I have until January 31, 2022 to reorganize and remove unnecessary items from our upstairs where many things that don't belong are being stored.

This has been mentioned before via bulletins and newsletters yet no one has called to let me know there are items that belong to them. Please call me at 440/864-9456 or email at [secretary4grace@gmail.com](mailto:secretary4grace@gmail.com) if I need to label something or you need to pick up something from upstairs. Hopefully we'll be able to continue with our Rummage sale next summer.

I also want to update the LWL: the "TEA" will be held in the Fellowship Hall on January 15, 2022 at 3 pm. **SAVE THE DATE!!**

Thank you,  
Lee Anne Christner

## **This month's GOOD NEWS Stories About What GOD Has Been Doing Among Us...**

On Tues October 26, my favorite Uncle, Uncle Andy died in a head-on collision. (Named my son after him, I always felt safe with him and Aunt Nita in Oklahoma summers). Two died in that collision. I prayed for their souls and know he is with his Nita. On the drive to Youngstown to spend Thanksgiving with Greg's family, I got a call that my niece's husband had also been in a head-on collision in N. Ridgeville the day before. He was blessed to have come out of it alive. I pray for his strength through his recovery. And I'm reminded how blessed he is from God for this outcome. This I consider a Good News Story of what God has been doing among me and my family. There are so many more if I just look with clear eyes and a whole heart.

Lee Anne Christner