

Grace Lutheran Church of Glen Ellyn

493 Forest Avenue at Pennsylvania
Glen Ellyn, Illinois 60137
www.graceglenellyn.org
Return Service Requested

West Conference - Metropolitan Chicago Synod - ELCA

MONTH OF DECEMBER 2023
1085423-12

Grace To You is the monthly newsletter of Grace Lutheran Church of Glen Ellyn.

Non-Profit Organization
U. S. Postage Paid
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137
Permit #104

FROM THE PASTOR



Well, this Advent is taking on a whole new level of complicated feeling for me. So this next-to-last note from me is a bit of a rambling rumination that reflects a lot of different feelings....

I'm in a whole new place of waiting to let go of what I know and entering into something I've never experienced. Waiting for the time of loss and goodbyes and sadness, and waiting for a time of relationships rekindled and new joys discovered. Waiting for a change which is completely normal and expected and still huge and disconcerting.

Advent has never felt quite like this, for me. As I think about it, I'm realizing that if I were ever able to get my head out of all the *expected* Advent experiences, this might be what I would have felt every year.

We usually focus of the preparation part of Advent, which makes a lot of theological sense. We are preparing our hearts and minds to receive what God has promised. But I wonder if I have gotten into a Preparation Rut that defeats the whole purpose. So often I prepare for *what I* expect. (And, let's be honest, *what you* expect....) When what I think God wants is for me to learn to prepare to receive what I *didn't* expect.

So much of the blessing and promise God sets in our path is unexpected. When our eyes, minds and hearts focus on what *should* be there it's just so, so easy to miss all the wonderful stuff in between and around what we're looking at. Nobody noticed Jesus when he

was born. His mom was too poor, too unimportant. His dad was too powerless. It took a whole host of angels to make the shepherds pay attention—and then everybody ignored them, too. Only a small, small handful of people noticed when God gave Earth the answer to its yearning.

And today the whole world is still filled with yearning. Which sounds sort of sentimental and beautiful but really is a pretty uncomfortable place to hang out. Just like 2000 years ago, some people self-medicate that yearning with rage, others with deflection, denial and over-consumption.

In Advent, God asks us, I think, to make space and time for the yearning even though it can be uncomfortable to really sit with. We're used to thinking of this story as something that happened 2000 years ago: "The world longed for peace. Jesus was born. Problem solved." But the coming of Jesus wasn't just "once upon a time." The yearning is every single day. The need for God's Promise is still every single day. God's act of saving the creation from death is every single day. The intentional act of opening ourselves up to receive the thing that we didn't expect to give us life is still every day.

We are still longing to be saved from the pain in this world. God is still being born in small, unrecognized places. Things will continue to change, we'll still sometimes feel overwhelmed. But God will continue to show up. Whether or not we always recognize that.

Pastor Melody

GRACE TO YOU
Proclaim, Build, and Serve



WELCOME THE SAVIOR WITH US!



This year Grace will celebrate with one service at 4:00pm on Christmas Eve. There will not be an in-person Sunday morning service on the 24th (see article below right) or a Christmas Day service on the 25th. Our Christmas Eve service will feature all the traditional Christmas Eve favorites, including communion and the Candlelight Service. The sermon will be especially designed to appeal to our youngest worshippers, although the message there won't be only for them! Special music, beautifully decorated and lit sanctuary, and best of all, the Word born amid us once again. Family and friends are more than welcome to join us!

CHILDREN & YOUTH SUNDAY SERVICE SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17TH 10:00AM

Join the children and youth of Grace as they share a special message about a special baby being born this Advent during our ***Do It Yourself Nativity!*** We look forward to sharing the message of joy through music and drama. See you there!

SUNDAY AND ZOOM WORSHIP

Sunday worship at Grace is at 10am followed by great refreshments and Christian fellowship at 11:00am.

We also offer Zoom for our Sunday worship service for those who are continuing to participate from home. If you need a bulletin, remember you can view (on another device) or download/print a bulletin from Grace's website. Just click on *Quick Link to Worship*.

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89031586315>

Dial In: 1 312 626 6799

Meeting ID: 890 3158 6315

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS FOR THE ALTAR

Poinsettias are now available to order to decorate the altar for Christmas. They are \$17 each. Order forms will be available in the narthex, on Grace's website, or call the church office. **Orders are due by December 3.** You may take your plant home after Grace's Christmas eve service.



FAITH TALK

UNTANGLE THE CHRISTMAS CONUNDRUM Thursday, December 7 from 12:30-2:00pm

Everyone thinks we all understand the Christmas story, but there are some...loose ends, maybe? What questions have you always wondered about? What has never made sense to you? And who came up with Santa Clause anyway??

Plus, if you'd like you can bring a favorite Christmas ornament with a story to share. If we run out of ways to stump Pastor Melody we'll tell some Christmas tales of our own. We'll make a party of it with some treats and warm drinks.

We meet on the Lower Level—just follow the signs. We are lovers of laughter as well as meaningful reflection and conversation. Hope to see you there!

THE TRADITION OF COCOA, COOKIES, & CAROLS ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13TH

Come join us for hot cocoa, cookies and of course caroling in the Sanctuary.

6:40-7:00pm: Grab cocoa and cookies and settle into your favorite singing spot!

7:00-7:30pm: Cozy sing-a-long in the Sanctuary.

Bring your pillows and blankets and wear your pj's for this night of magic!

This is a fun event to get you in the spirit of the season. We provide the snacks and music, just bring your beautiful spirit!

DECEMBER 24TH ADVENT 4 WORSHIP SERVICE

We are excited to be part of a joint worship project for the **morning of Sunday, December 24**, partnering with Faith Lutheran and St. Paul Lutheran to bring you a **pre-recorded Service of the Word for the Fourth Sunday of Advent**.

Pastor Melody will be joining Pastor Jared of St. Paul for a special dialog reflection on the day's reading, and several Grace members will join Bradford to create a unique and beautiful rendition of *O come, O Come, Emmanuel*. If you like, you can join in the Advent candle-lighting by having your own Advent wreath ready at home. We'll post the link for this special collaborative worship service and you can watch the service at your convenience that morning. **There will be no in-person service at Grace on the morning of December 24. We hope to see you at our Christmas Eve worship at 4:00!**

FAITH FORMATION

Hello Grace Families!

We have lots of fun activities planned – crafts, baking, games, and music to enhance our faith learning. Bradford will be joining us at the beginning of class each Sunday to assist with all things musical!

Sunday Faith Formation Format:

9:00-9:10a – Meet downstairs in the Gathering Room – centers/playtime

9:10-9:30a – Music with Bradford and Story/Lesson

9:30-9:50a – Craft/Activity/Snack/Closing Prayer

Fall Semester Class Dates:

11/26: OFF FOR THANKSGIVING

12/3: Faith Formation – 9:00-9:50a

12/10: Faith Formation – 9:00-9:50a

****12/13 - Wednesday**

- 5:30p - Pizza
- 6:15p – Rehearsal for Nativity service/music
- 6:40p – Cocoa & Carols in the sanctuary

12/17: Faith Formation – 9:00-9:50a – Music Rehearsal (Pastor Melody Leads “Do It Yourself Nativity” Service @ 10:00a)

12/24, 31, & 1/7: OFF FOR HOLIDAYS AND SCHOOL WINTER BREAK

1/14/2024 – Faith Formation returns!

We are excited to spend the year ahead helping our children grow in faith! If you have questions or suggestions as we move forward - both are always welcome :)

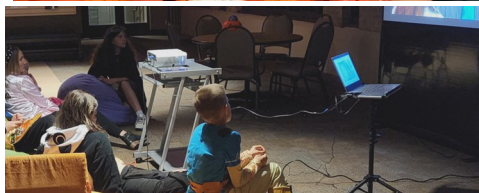
Grace & peace,

Cyndy, Bradford & Heather



HALLOWEEN PARTY ON OCTOBER 20

The evening started with Bradford playing haunting music on the organ followed by pizza and caramel apples then popcorn and a movie. A fun event for all ages! Yes, that is your Grace staff - Barbara, Bradford, Melody





Join us for Grace Café on Wednesday, December 20th Grace is sponsoring this program for Grace seniors and neighboring community seniors! Join us for lunch, conversation, and a fun activity every 3rd Wednesday of the month from 11am-1pm. Sign-up is required on the sheet posted in the narthex, Grace’s website, or contact the church office. RSVP is due the Friday prior to the event. Suggested donation of \$3.00 per person.

COMMUNITY QUILTERS

The *Community Quilters* have been moved to the main floor next to the Sr. Center office. The quilters meet on the **2nd Wednesday of the month from 10:30-12 with Michele Fenske**. Bring a friend. No experience is necessary. Please enter through the west entrance on Forest Avenue.

PEOPLE OF GRACE

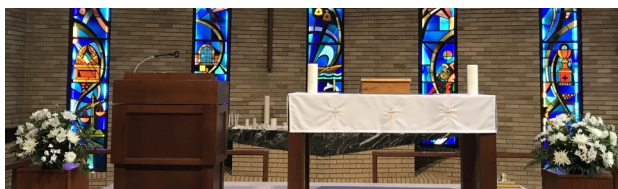
Please join us for our next People of Grace for on **Tuesday, December 19th**. The group meets monthly on the third Tuesday at **7pm**. The location will vary each month to keep it fresh.



Please RSVP to Jeff Nelson if you are planning to attend. jeff.nelson@vlses.com

WORSHIP LEADERS

We need people willing to serve as zoom tech, lector, cross-bearer, and communion assistant. We also need a minimum of two ushers for each week. If you can be a lector/help with carrying the cross and/or assisting with communion, please contact Susan Jacobson or the church office. Mark Drager schedules the ushers. Mark Hamilton works with the zoom techs. Thank you!



CHRISTMAS CONCERT SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 4PM

Presented by our Director of Music, Bradford Thompson and his friends. Their annual concert in Alabama has been met with such success that they’ve decided to try it here! Tickets can be purchased through the website or through the church office. Bring the whole family and all your friends! We’d love a packed house.

GRACE CAFÉ ON OCTOBER 18

We had a full house with fellowship and a fun craft.



FELLOWSHIP COFFEE HOUR



Here's an easy way to help out at church, volunteer for coffee hour! It's easy to do. Just make coffee, bring some sweets and set it up in the fellowship room for 30-45 minutes after church. This has been a great way to give members an opportunity to catch up with one another and enjoy some fellowship time together. Call the church office if you would like to volunteer, or talk to one of the current coffee volunteers.

MONDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

Beginning on **December 4, 2023, at 7:30pm**, the Monday Evening Bible Study group will read and discuss the **Gospel of Mark**, which was the first written and the shortest of the Gospels in the Bible as it has come down to us. This Gospel will also be the focus of the Gospel lessons read in worship for the coming year.

Traditionally, this Gospel is said to have been written by John Mark, an early missionary companion of Paul, in Rome based upon the recollections of Peter, the closest companion of Jesus. The Gospel concentrates on the events, with some parables and other teachings, but moves quite rapidly through the public ministry first of John the Baptist and then of Jesus. There is no Christmas narrative. Mark provides the underlying structure of Matthew and Luke, who add much of the teaching ministry to it. Studied on its own, Mark shows what the early church, post-Resurrection, looked back and saw as the key essentials of the life of Jesus.

The Monday night group has become close-knit over the years, but there is always room to add more to our circle. We meet both in person in the Education Office and via ZOOM. If you have not participated before and wish to join us, please contact Mark Hamilton or Vince Hardt so we can order a course book for you.
marham999@gmail.com or vvince2001@hotmail.com

Merry Christmas



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF GLEN ELLYN

West Conference - Metropolitan Chicago Synod
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 493 Forest Avenue at Pennsylvania Avenue
 Glen Ellyn, Illinois 60137
 Office: 630.469.1555
 Emergency Pastoral Contact: 630.674.2887
 Email: info@graceglenellyn.org

www.GraceGlenEllyn.org

Every Member: Minister & Missionary!

Melody Eastman, Pastor
 Carole LoGalbo, M.S., LCPC Parish Counselor
 Barbara Sudds, Office Manager
 Bradford Thompson, Children's Ministry Coordinator
 Bradford Thompson, Minister of Music

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9:30am - 3:00pm
 Tuesday and Thursday 1:00pm - 3:00pm



ATTENDANCE

DATE	IN-PERSON	ZOOM
10/1	42	8
10/8	50	7
10/15	53	10
10/22	62	11
10/29	59	10

PRAYER REQUESTS

Sue Davison and Brenda Dodge for healing & strength

Prayers for our Homebound Member:
 Dorothy Tracy

