

## 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 2020**  
**1085420-12**

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

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### FROM THE PASTOR

Christmas will look different this year. But then, Christmas looks different every year. We just don't pay attention to that.

When I was a kid, my stockings contained an orange, an apple, a banana, and nuts. A little bit of candy, maybe, but not a lot. If we said we wanted more candy, my mom would tell us how the orange they got in their stocking when she was a kid was an unbelievable treat—something they got only once a year.

When my dad was growing up, Christmas presents (when there were any) were limited to one useful item per person. And if the tree had candles on it, they were only lit for a few minutes. (Candles were *expensive*.) They may have gotten walnuts in their stockings (there were lots of walnut trees on their land), but no way could Grampa afford the luxury of an orange.

To mark their first Christmas at Plymouth colony, the Pilgrims worked in the fields. In later years, visitors to the colony who took the day off to play games in the streets were roundly chastised by the governor. Later the Puritans took things a step further by outlawing Christmas celebrations altogether. It wasn't until 1870 that Christmas became a federally recognized holiday, with stores closed and churches open.

As I write this, it very much looks like we won't be gathering for a Christmas celebration in the sanctuary. That's hard—but Beloved, it does *not* destroy Christmas. Not by a long shot. It won't look and feel like it has in recent years—but maybe it's a good thing to strip away some of the "extra" we've added with such delight (and, let's be honest, stress) over the years, and remember what the first Christmas

looked like. Mary and Joseph couldn't get together with family either. Who even knows what they ate for dinner—Joseph probably bought some lentil stew from the innkeeper. Those gifts from the magi didn't show up for another three years. It was...spare.

What they *did* have was the promise of Jesus. They had mysterious tidings they didn't fully understand. They had gratitude and hope. They totally had Christmas.

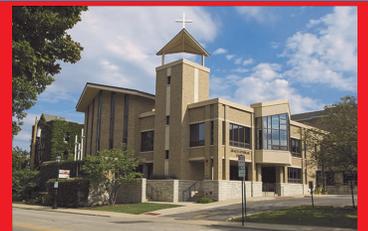
Even though we can't gather physically this year, we still get to add a lot of extras to our Christmas celebrations. We live in a decade where technology will still allow us to connect. (Imagine this pandemic in 1990! The World Wide Web was introduced publicly in 1991.) We can still hear the Word and sing the carols. We get the day off. There are plenty of oranges. Probably too many gifts.

Don't let the changes fool you into thinking you "can't have Christmas this year." Just understand that it's going to depend on your willingness to remember what really makes Christmas. Connect with your Beloved friends in faith in Advent (check out the article on Wednesday night Advent devotions over Zoom). Mark the season of Preparation with daily time to focus on the promise at the center of it all. Call friends on Christmas day. Write some notes and drop them off at your neighbors' houses—especially the ones who won't be expecting it. *Embody* the Christmas gift of Jesus' love for somebody who really needs it that day.

This is a great opportunity for a new tradition of getting back to basics. Simplify and clarify. Where there are things you have to let go of, give them to God. (We'll help you with that in the midweek Advent devotions.) Just maybe, the more we clear away extraneous stuff, the more we'll recognize that the Christmas we need the most comes in the still, small spaces of every day.

*Pastor Melody*

**GRACE TO YOU**  
*Proclaim, Build, and Serve*



## CHURCH OFFICES CLOSED

The church offices will be closed  
December 25 through January 1.



## MIDWEEK ADVENT DEVOTIONS: 15 MINUTES OF HOPE

Well, at this point we've been expecting about as long as Mary has! The middle of Advent will mark nine months of waiting for the pandemic to end and the world to "go back to normal." Expectation as the theme of Advent resonates like never before.

But the thing we are waiting for isn't just about going back to what makes us comfortable. It's about moving forward into God's reign no matter what happens around us. It's about hope in the middle of fear and weariness and struggle. It's about love in the middle of loneliness.

This Advent, I hope you'll take some time to "manage your expectations." Grace will be supporting you in focusing on where God is found in this time of waiting and uncertainty (something Mary and Joseph understood very well!). Grace members will find a small gift from Grace arriving at your door sometime soon, if you haven't received it already. It's designed to encourage and support you this Advent season, and we hope you will find it helpful.

In addition, please join me on **Wednesdays in Advent at 7:00 pm** for 15 minutes or so of prayer, reflection and peace. Just a short gathering (over Zoom, of course) to focus your mind, quiet your spirit, and rest in promise. Your Beloved Friends in Christ are here to support you. By joining us, your presence will support them. We all need that these days.

I will send out a link to the Zoom Advent Devotions through *News from Grace*, Grace's weekly e-blast. Let's "Prepare the Way" together!

Pastor Melody

## 2020 YEAR-END STOCK OR SECURITIES GIFTING

If you intend to gift stock or securities to Grace, for your year-end charitable donation, please do so no later than December 15. This allows for sales to close and monies flow into the books before the Holidays. Also, the stock market is thinly traded the last week of the year, and causes price swings; good to avoid that.

## COUNCIL UPDATE

Here is an update on Council happenings..... Recently the Metropolitan Chicago Synod surveyed synod congregation council Presidents. The results showed that a majority of congregations are having their church services online via Zoom, Facebook Live, etc. and giving has decreased during this period as well. Grace is in the same situation as the majority of congregations in our synod.

Our House Church Services held via Zoom have been averaging about 45 total attendees per week spread across four Zoom calls hosted by Grace members. On All Saints Sunday we also had a live Zoom service with Pastor Melody and Bradford coming to us live from the sanctuary. Special thank you to Marty Eastman and Jake Jacobson for their help with this service. We had 61 members attend this service via Zoom.

The church council continues our normal monthly meeting schedule via Zoom calls. Every meeting includes a discussion on when we can return to in person services. We discuss using various CDC metrics to guide us, along with monitoring our community metrics and looking at when other churches are returning to in person worship. Given the current situation, we envision continuing the combination of House Church services and occasional live Zoom services for the foreseeable future.

The council also wants to thank you for your continued generous giving during this difficult time.

## HOUSE CHURCH WORSHIP VIA PHONE OR ZOOM EVERY SUNDAY MORNING AT 9:30AM!

We would be so blessed to have you join us. Register online for a House Church at [graceglenellyn.org](http://graceglenellyn.org) (on the main page Announcements).

**GRACE LUTHERAN'S CHILDREN, YOUTH, & FAMILY MINISTRY**

***WE WILL TAKE A BREAK FROM LESSONS IN JANUARY DUE TO MRS. FICARELLA BEING ON MATERNITY LEAVE. WE WILL BEGIN AGAIN IN FEBRUARY 2021.***

**Classes offered in December:**

**Virtual Little Lights: For a family with Babies – Toddler age 2:** These lessons include a simple prayer, a story read via video, a coloring page and a simple song. We will begin with stories in the Old Testament and end the school year in the New Testament. These will come in an automated email on Fridays.

**Virtual Spark: Preschool-Kindergarten:** These lessons include an Opening & Closing Prayer, Bible Story video reading, Video lesson with a recorded follow up discussion, a craft, and a song to sing. All lessons will follow the Lectionary Calendar for this year. This means your children will be studying the same Gospel and readings as you do that week in Worship! These will come in an automated email on Fridays.

**Non-Virtual Shine: 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grade:** These lessons came in paper form in your Shine binders from Mrs. Drager. There will be no Virtual Shine lessons again until February. All lessons will follow the Lectionary Calendar for this year. This means your children will be studying the same Gospel and readings as you do that week in Worship!

**Virtual Faith Formation “Connections” Service Projects:**

Those of you participating in Virtual Faith Formation will see that your crafts for November/December will include pre-stamped & addressed envelopes for your child to send a sweet note or drawing to members of our Congregation. This is a wonderful way to keep our community connected during a time of increased isolation. The late October supply drop off will include a packet that will have all of this clearly labeled for you. Your participation in this small piece will put a warm smile on many faces this season. Thank you!

**Confirmation is up and running on Zoom!**

We have planned a schedule that allows our group to connect weekly, alternating Wednesdays and Sundays. Zoom link is emailed out weekly. It is not too late to join Confirmation! Email Pastor Melody Eastman with any questions [meastman@graceglenellyn.org](mailto:meastman@graceglenellyn.org). The dates to meet are listed below.

**Sunday Morning 1-hour Gospel Study @ 11:00am with Dominic LoGalbo**

The Gospel Study is a combined study with Confirmation Students. Come join us for great discussion and ways to apply these lessons to our lives. December 6 and January 10 & 24 are the upcoming dates. Email Dominic LoGalbo [dlogalbo@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dlogalbo@sbcglobal.net) with any questions!

**Wednesday Evening 1-hour Confirmation Discussion @7:30pm with Pastor Melody**

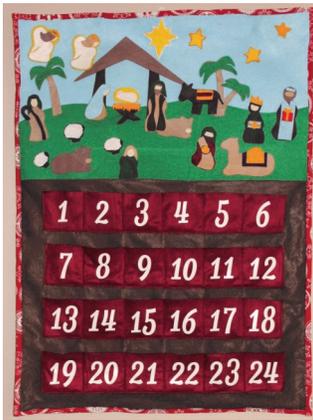
December 2 & 16; January 20; February 3

***Friends are ALWAYS welcome to join in our Virtual Programming! Email Becky for more information!***

Peace Be Upon You Grace Family and Friends.

Becky Ficarella, Ministry Associate

[bficarella@graceglenellyn.org](mailto:bficarella@graceglenellyn.org)



**REVERSE ADVENT FOOD DRIVE**

The Reverse Advent Food Drive for the Glen Ellyn Food Pantry will begin a little earlier this year. **We are asking you to begin collecting items each day starting November 25<sup>th</sup>.** You may then bring your filled bags to the Food Pantry between December 21<sup>st</sup> -23<sup>rd</sup> between 9 and 11am. You can find the list on Grace’s Website at [gracelenellyn.org](http://gracelenellyn.org).

**RIDE AND SING**

Sunday, October 11th's Ride and Sing was off and driving at 11:00am. First stop, Bob Stein's house and out came Bob to enjoy the Ride and Sing crew. On to Ken and Joan Frank, Norma Peterson, and last but not least, Lois Pertle. These folks either signed up for the mini concert or were recommended by church members. The weather was great - the fall color spectacular! Grace had ZOOM services at 9:30am and Ride and Sing followed the services. Look for another Ride and Sing in the future.



**ALL-CHURCH CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE!  
VIA ZOOM AT 4:00 P.M.**

Even though we'll be worshipping together online, we will still have some special surprises to make your Christmas Eve worship special! Join us for another **All Church Zoom Service on Christmas Eve at 4:00pm** — complete with communion and candle-lighting. We will be sending out the link for this service through *News From Grace*, Grace’s weekly e-blast.

Mark your calendar, keep your eye out for more info, and plan to help us receive our King on Christmas Eve!

**NEW BANNERS AT GRACE**



**DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES**

- 12/6 Dr. Robert & Erin Dieter (23)
- 12/11 Robert & Carole LoGalbo (27)
- 12/14 Richard & Bonnie Pasbrig (36)
- 12/20 Scott & Barbara Marquardt (18)
- 12/23 Jeff & Susi Nelson (26)
- 12/29 Joe & Lynn Murawski (19)

**DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

- 12/6 Marty Eastman
- 12/9 Mark Anderson
- 12/14 Jeff Berta
- 12/14 Carson Graf
- 12/14 Chuck Miller
- 12/17 David Zimmer
- 12/22 Sarah Jacobo
- 12/22 Rebecca Lawrence
- 12/26 Pam Zimmer
- 12/27 Sabrina Miller
- 12/30 Hope Serritella

**AMAZONSMILE**

Remember to shop at AmazonSmile when making purchases online. In order to browse or shop at AmazonSmile, customers must first select a charitable organization. Here is the link for Grace Lutheran:

<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/36-2496438>

When you sign on, you will see “Supporting Grace Lutheran Church” in the upper left hand corner. Smile Foundation will donate a percentage of your purchase amount to Grace.

**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](http://www.graceglenellyn.org)

**Every Member: Minister & Missionary!**

Melody Eastman, Pastor  
 Becky Ficarella, Ministry Associate  
 Carole LoGalbo, M.S., LCPC Parish Counselor  
 Barbara Sudds, Office Manager  
 Bradford Thompson, Minister of Music

**CHURCH OFFICE HOURS**

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

**PRAYER REQUESTS**

Marilyn Goodrich, Dorothy Tracy, Sigrid Elliott, Elizabeth Amber, Chris Danly, and those infected with the Covid-19 virus for healing and strength.

Family and friends of AnnMarie McFarland, friend of Grace Lutheran, for comfort in grief.

**Prayers for our Homebound Members:**

Anita Blakemore, Evelyn Elson, Carol Peterson, Norma Petersen, Dorothy Stein

**NOSES AND NUMBERS**

DATE	ATTENDANCE		OFFERING
	SUNDAY	WEDNESDAY	
10/4	43	0	\$ 2,750
10/11	52	0	\$ 5,785
10/18	47	0	\$ 5,805
10/25	40	0	\$ 5,135



We are so blessed to have Attendance numbers again!! Thanks be to God.

Grace’s income, minus the PPP Gov’t Aid Loan, through October 2020 is \$288,329 while expenses incurred during the same period are \$370,832.

