

Grace Lutheran Church of Glen Ellyn

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

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

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FROM THE PASTOR

I think this is the Christmas where people were really thinking we'd be "back to normal," whatever that means. I certainly thought so. And by "back to normal" I *thought* I meant "not having to think about bad stuff during the holidays."

We're definitely not there—and maybe won't be again.

There's a lot of the "bad stuff" pressing on us these days. Politics is just so freaking *ugly*—to the point of feeling scary. Climate change is definitely getting in our faces. (I'm sitting on my front patio enjoying the 72-degree weather as I write this December newsletter article.) The economy is recovering—for some. But it's still punching plenty of people right in the utility and grocery and gas-line budgets. Which is making Advent and Christmas feel significantly different for a lot of people. And of course there's war.... This stuff isn't gonna get resolved in the next few weeks.

But Beloved, all of these realities don't "ruin" Christmas. They are the *reason* for Christmas. The only things these hard realities get in the way of are the false, idealized fantasies that have been marketed to us. It's not necessary to have a "perfect" holiday. It's not necessary to feel a certain way, or eat a certain way, or gift a certain way.

And I *know* you know this. But it still seems necessary for all of us (including me) to *remember*.

Jesus came into a broken world—a world that was just as broken then as it is today. Even though climate change wasn't an issue back then, the reality of people suffering from hunger, displacement, poverty and oppression was

just as real. People were cruel to each other. Systems were cruel, too. There were threats and war and violence all over the place.

And in the middle of all that ugly mess, God decided to be incredibly, inordinately *present*. Enfleshed, subject to all the same pain and fear, vulnerable, heartbroken, and loving.

When we see all the hard things happening around us, it's really easy to turn to the "Where is God??" mentality. Where is God when hurricane after hurricane strikes? Where is God when gun violence keeps claiming lives? Where is God when our loved ones (or ourselves) continue to struggle with mental health crises that just don't seem to be going away?

Christmas is God's answer: "I'm here." Not because the holiday is candle-lit and heart-warming. But precisely *because* life is not. "I'm here." *Right* here—in the middle of the lost idealism and worrying realities and hard truths. "I'm here. And I'm not going anywhere except with you, through whatever you're going through, through hell and back—to life. I'm here for you and with you, and nothing is going to change that. Not war. Not violence. Not hatred. Not isolation or depression or homelessness. I'm here."

I pray that this Christmas, this becomes the message you hear the most clearly. During the moments of joy and beauty and laughter, and during the moments of sadness and longing, the message we need the most remains exactly the same. God is with us—right here.

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**. Our worship 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 11TH 10:00AM

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

FAITH FORMATION FOR ALL AGES 9:00AM-9:45AM

Children and Youth meet in the sanctuary on December 4 and 11 to prepare for the Children & Youth Service. Note new location. Adults meet in the Fellowship Room.

SUNDAY WORSHIP TIME

Sunday worship at Grace is at 10am followed by fellowship at 11am.

ZOOM WORSHIP

We will continue to offer a Zoom link 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

FAITH TALK IN DECEMBER:

HOW DID CHRISTMAS GET TO BE CHRISTMAS?

There are quite a few questions about the Christmas story, including why shepherds were with their sheep in the fields in the middle of winter. (Spoiler: *They weren't. It was spring.*) So how did we get Christmas in December, why did the Church leave it there, how does it fit in with everything else, and what role does it play in the Church's proclamation of the Gospel?

Join Pastor Melody for another lively, sometimes surprising and often laughter-filled conversation about some of the things you may have never realized about this major holiday. **FaithTalk meets on Thursday, December 1 from 12:30-2:00pm** in the Kitchen Room on the lower level.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS FOR THE ALTAR

Poinsettias are now available to order to decorate the altar for Christmas. They are \$16 each. Order forms will be available in the narthex, on Grace's website, or call the church office. **Orders are due by December 7.** You may take your plant home after Grace's Christmas eve service or pick it up from the sanctuary before Tuesday, December 27.



AN O'CAROLAN IRISH CHRISTMAS

Friday, December 16 at 7:00pm

Tickets are still available for this extra-special Christmas concert! We are thrilled to welcome back to Grace fiddler Katie Grennan and accordion and concertina master John Williams in their tour with Winifred Horan (fiddle) and Utsad Lal (piano) as **Reverie Road**.

After an extremely successful fall tour on the east coast, Reverie Road is offering a few unique Irish Christmas concerts featuring the beautiful tunes of legendary 1600's harper Turlough O'Carolan. There will also be plenty of your favorite carols to sing along with, too!

Join us for a night of stunningly beautiful airs, foot-pounding feels, and Christmas songs guaranteed to lift your Holiday spirit.

Tickets are \$20 (\$21 online at GraceGlenEllyn.org). Advanced purchase is highly recommended.

GRACE LUTHERAN'S CHILDREN, YOUTH, & FAMILY MINISTRY

FAITH FORMATION IN DECEMBER

Spark Preschool-K , Shine (1st-6th Grade), Faith In Action (7th-12th Grade)

All groups will meet 9-9:45am in the Sanctuary on December 4th & 11th to prepare for the Children & Youth Service on December 11th.

December 11th will be our final Faith Formation gathering in 2022. Faith Formation will start up again on January 8! Enjoy your Winter Break. See you in Worship!



REVERSE ADVENT FOOD DRIVE DECEMBER 1-24TH

Support the Glen Ellyn Food Pantry (GEFP) this season with a boost to their shelves. Bring your donations that you collect each day to Grace on December 24th! See the insert in this issue of GTY for recommended items of need. Donations may be dropped off before the 24th if you are unable to attend the Christmas Eve service.

THE TRADITION OF COCOA, COOKIES & CAROLS RETURNS ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14TH

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

6:40-7:00pm: Grab cocoa, cookies and settle in 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!



WEDNESDAY NIGHT FAITH FORMATION CONFIRMATION 7TH/8TH GRADE @ FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

We will meet at Faith Lutheran Church from **7:00-8:30pm** the following Wednesday nights: **December 7 and 14.**

NO CLASS ON December 21 and 28. Class will resume in January.

GINGERBREAD HOUSE & TREE TRIMMING PIZZA PARTY WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30TH FOR ALL GRACE CHILDREN, YOUTH & THEIR FAMILY: 5:30-7:30PM

5:30-6:00pm: Pizza, Salad, Fruit/Veggie Tray

6:00-6:30pm: Decorate Gingerbread House & Create your own gingerbread treat!

6:30-7:30pm: Create ornaments and decorate the Sanctuary Christmas Tree.

Come join us for this fun and festive night!



Becky Ficarella, Ministry Associate

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She/Her



GRACEGIVES HOSTS SOUP SUNDAY

Come help us round out this year of ministry with *GraceGives Soup Sunday*.

Grace members have donated delicious soups to be sold on Sunday 12/4 immediately after Service in the Fellowship Room. They will include a package of crackers and a spoon in your bag to go!

A suggested donation of \$3 per bowl. What a great way to get your lunch or dinner covered for that day while supporting a great cause.

SIMPLE THANKSGIVING LUNCHEON & WORSHIP WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23RD



Join the Social Committee for a simple soup and sandwich luncheon at noon in the Narthex, followed by a Service of Worship at 12:45pm in the Sanctuary. Sign up in the Narthex today!

We are looking for volunteers to help with set up, serving, and clean up for this event. Please let Becky Ficarella know if you can help!

PEOPLE OF GRACE

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29TH AT BARONE'S!

The Holiday Season Fellowship Gathering is on **November 29 at 7:00pm**. We will gather at Barone's Restaurant in Glen Ellyn. RSVP with Jeff Nelson at jeff.nelson@vlses.com.

A NOTE OF THANKS FROM THE STREICHERS

Pr. Melody & Members of Grace,
Thank you so much for such a beautiful baptismal service. It was such a joy to have our boys brought into a life of Christ with the Spirit of Children leading the Service!

Watching our nieces and nephews feel comfortable and excited to join and participate in the service was truly warming. ❤️ Thank you for being such an all-welcoming, loving congregation.

The boys baptismal gift of the shell and bible was very special. The boys love the shells, and Johnny already knows which one is his and which one is Joe's. 😊

Thank you! Love and Blessings,
Matt, Amanda, Johnny, & Joey

LOOKING FOR GIFT IDEAS?



Check out the **ELCA Good Gifts Catalog at goodgifts.elca.org**. You can honor someone with the gift of a piglet or goat, chickens, or a cow to provide a family in need with renewable resources to fight hunger. Or you can gift an environmentally friendly cook stove that works better and reduces health risks for families. Or how about a computer for a community center that allows children to do schoolwork and learn tech skills? So many great options for you as an individual shopper or for a group gift.

Another alternative is gifting earth-friendly items that cut back on single use items of paper or plastic. Here are a few ideas:

- Steel or glass dental floss dispenser, with refillable silk floss. Eliminates the plastic of the dispenser *and the floss*. *The dispenser is reusable and the floss is compostable!*
- Silicone baking mats. These eliminate the need to line pans with single-use foil, and make cleanup a breeze. Food browns and crisps beautifully, and they can go in the dishwasher.
- Reusable food wraps. These cloths are cotton permeated with beeswax. They help prevent mold, seal to the shape you need (awesome for sandwiches and blocks of cheese!) and can be used over and over. Wash in cool to barely warm water to avoid rinsing away the wax. When they begin to get a bit flaky, simply lay them flat and warm them gently in a low-temperature oven, and they're good as new.
- Silicone resealable bags. These replace disposable resealable sandwich and food storage bags. They can be used in the freezer and withstand heat. Hint: Sometimes the seal can get a little stiff, but rub just a drop of oil along the edges and they work like magic again.
- Shampoo and hair conditioner bars. Create a little spa basket and get rid of the plastic bottles, while surrounding your recipient in wonderful scents.
- Cotton napkins. Replace disposable napkins or paper towels with something cool and pretty they can use every day!

For some of these items, the initial cost is a bit higher than the disposable item they replace, which is why they make great gifts—especially for someone on a budget.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Lori Garabrandt, Rich Davison, Dorothy Derrico, Susan Yerger, Brittany Huizenga, Dorothy Tracy for healing and strength.
 Family and friends of Mike Truesdale for comfort in grief.
Prayers for our Homebound Members:
 Carol Petersen, Norma Petersen

**CHILDREN & YOUTH SUNDAY
 OCTOBER 23**

Thank you to Emily Kregor, Natalie Kregor, and Carson Graf who provided piano solos and to all of the children who provided the Krysal Bells music as we prepared for worship. To Cyndy Drager who led the children in a sermon play around the Lord’s Prayer and taught us how and why we pray. A big thank you to Bradford and the students who presented Jesus Loves Me on Handchimes and to Becky Ficarella for coordinating the Service and Youth volunteers.



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 West Conference - Metropolitan Chicago Synod
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
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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 1:00pm - 3:00pm



ATTENDANCE

DATE	IN-PERSON	ZOOM
10/2	51	5
10/9	45	9
10/16	43	5
10/23	83	3
10/30	56	10

ALTAR FLOWERS

The flower chart is on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Room. Arrangements are \$20 each (note price increase). Sign up on the chart in the Fellowship Room or you may email or call the church office. Please indicate how you would like the flowers noted in the bulletin.

