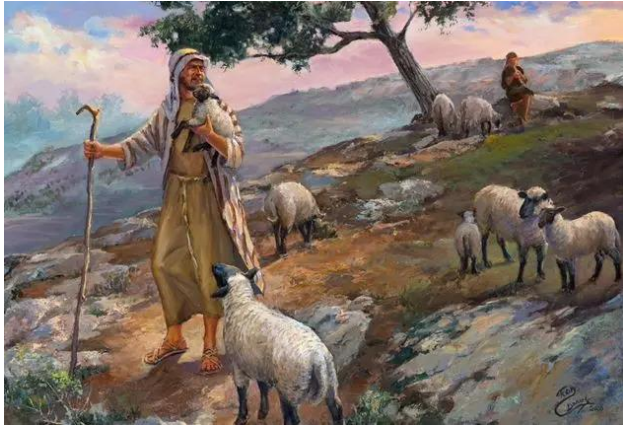


Grace Notes



December 2024 Newsletter of Grace and Glory Lutheran Church

Sunday Worship at 10:00 AM

Grace & Glory Sanctuary

Facebook Live

683 Thomas Jefferson Parkway

Palmyra, VA 22963

G&G Office Phone: (434) 589-2217

G&G E-mail: admin@graceandglory.org

Website: www.graceandglory.church

Rev. William Strong, Pastor: rev.whs@gmail.com

Phone: 804-517-2296

Good People,

I overheard a conversation the other day about the election where one person responded to the results by saying, “It’s just like Christmas has come early!” Yet I know other people on election night who wept bitter tears of fear, despair, and grief. How is it that the same event can cause such disparate reactions? I find this hard to understand and even harder to navigate. Who is right and who is wrong? And, most importantly, how can I tell between the two? As I struggled with my confusion, I began to suspect that, like many of us, I was completely missing the real point.

Dr. Gerald May, a noted psychologist, teacher, and spiritual writer, tells a story that helped me stop dividing up the world, and my experiences of it, into good and bad, black, and white, left and right. Dr. May talks about a time when he developed cancer, and that was bad. But having cancer brought him closer to his loved ones and to God, and that was good. Then, Dr. May was administered an experimental drug that cured his cancer, and that was good. But it turns out, the experimental drug caused congestive heart disease, and that was very bad.

So, was the cancer that made him sick, yet brought him nearer to family, friends, and faith, good or bad? Was the drug that saved his life but damaged his heart, good or bad? Reflecting on these events, Dr. May could reach no conclusion. Rather, he focused on discerning the will of God by practicing gratitude – gratitude for the time he was given and the love he was shown. Haven’t we all been given the gift of time and experienced some measure of love? Where, then, is our gratitude? Why have we exchanged thankfulness for entitlement and fear?

To be honest, most of us are not big fans of gratitude and thanks – to be grateful for something acknowledges the reality that we needed something, something we couldn’t supply for ourselves. We don’t like to be grateful because we don’t like to be indebted because we don’t like to be needy because we don’t like not being in control. And there it is. Ingratitude and thanklessness are all about maintaining the illusions of power and control. We don’t like to admit we need God, and we really don’t like to admit we need each other – but we do, we really do.

We are the body of Christ, which means that in some mysterious way heaven is other people. Heaven is other people. And I, for one, am grateful for that, and above all, for all of you. As I’ve pointed out, in the Old Testament there is no such thing as a shepherd without a flock. The shepherd needs the sheep to be a shepherd, and the sheep need the shepherd for protection. They need each other just like a congregation needs a pastor and a pastor needs a congregation. Without you all I couldn’t be what God has called me to be – and what’s true for you and me is also true for all of us, all together.

Let me close with Paul's words for this Sunday: How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith. Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

This is my prayer for each of you. May it also be our prayer for each other. Amen.

Peace and All Good,
- Pastor William

Dear Grace & Glory Family,

Advent Season is a very special time of year that sometimes gets lost in the bright lights of the Christmas season it precedes. The first day of Advent is the first day of a new Liturgical (or church) calendar and begins a four-week period of preparation in anticipation of the nativity of Jesus at Christmas. It is also the time when we reflect back on what has been another extraordinary year for Grace & Glory as a congregation. Imagine what this year would have looked like without the exceptional gifts of our Pastor and Church staff. Please consider acknowledging their contributions with a gift.

If you wish to participate in a congregational gift to Pastor and/or the Church Staff, our Treasurer, Louise Jargowsky, will be collecting funds **until December 22nd**. Please make any checks payable to Louise with your gift designation on the memo line. Her contact information is below. **Please do not include your gift as part of your weekly offerings.** Thank you for your consideration.

Peace, Hope, and Health

Grace & Glory Leadership Team

Louise Jargowsky
382 Jefferson Drive
Palmyra, VA 22963
434.589.3836
loujsky@gmail.com

Christmas Eve Service
7:00 PM

Advent Season Devotions

The Virginia Synod Office of the Bishop has provided a booklet of devotions for the Advent and Christmas Seasons. Copies of the booklet are also available in the Narthex or you can view the booklet by clicking [here](#).

Giving thanks during the Holidays

As I write this note it is just a few days before Thanksgiving. And while it is a time to spend with family, good friends, and even better food, it is also a time to take it back to the basics and remember who we have to thank most of all. Thanksgiving Day is a day that should be centered on gratitude rather than mountains of food and endless football games. It should be a day when we look inward at what we have instead of outwards at what we want. From the food on our plates to the people around us, this holiday urges us to be content. Thanksgiving is a time to reconnect with God and express gratitude for all He has given us.

When President Lincoln declared Thanksgiving a national holiday in 1863 he said that Thanksgiving is a day “to be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be—That we may then all unite in rendering unto him our sincere and humble thanks.”

I’m also writing this note just a few days before the beginning of Advent. The first day of Advent is the first day of a new Liturgical (or church) calendar and begins a four-week period of preparation in anticipation of the nativity of Jesus at Christmas. Happy New Year Grace and Glory! It is also the time when we reflect back on the past year at Grace and Glory. There is much to be thankful for.

We are blessed to have an interim Pastor when many congregations do not. We are blessed with a wonderful music ministry and a talented church staff. We are also thankful for our beautiful worship space. And we give thanks for the many gifts of time, talent, and treasure that God has bestowed upon our Congregation. Advent’s themes are about hope, peace, joy, and love. As we approach week one let us think about what that hope means as seen in Mark 1:1-3

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ. It is said in the prophet Isaiah: “Look! I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make ready the way of the Lord, make God’s paths straight’” (Mark 1:1-3)

Peace and Hope,

J. Patrick McCloud

Stewardship Fall Appeal

The Stewardship Team would like to thank everyone for their very generous response to the 2024 Stewardship Fall Appeal, Disciples to Apostles. As of November 24th ,we have received 28 pledges totaling \$167,700. Last year we received 29 commitments totaling \$146,550. That’s an increase of 14.4% or \$23,258. We’ve exceeded our goal of an additional \$20,000 and we’re not done!

Items of note regarding the campaign:

- We have 100% participation from both the Leadership and Stewardship teams.
- We have three new commitments this year.
- 60 % of the commitments received to date represent an increase from last year.
The average percentage increase is 14.4% versus our target of 10%, !

Thank you all for your generosity. Thank you to all who have shared their financial gifts this year, to those who have already committed to next year, and to those who plan on committing in the days to come. A reminder that there are pledge cards in the Narthex if you need one, and that you can turn in your card at any time between now and the end of the year. We give thanks for your generosity.

Grace and Glory Stewardship Team

Leadership Team Meeting summary

The Leadership Team met on Nov. 20, 2024

Pastor's Report: Pastor Strong remains encouraged with how Grace & Glory continues to thrive during our call process to find a full-time pastor. He is extremely happy to be spending this time with us all. Last month's Path Ahead sessions were a big success, and several attendees found it applicable to current circumstances in their own lives. He would like to offer it again next year, in addition to a series on prayer.

President's Report: Always, but especially during this Stewardship campaign, Pat extends special thanks for the Time & Talents offered by congregation members Kevin Davidson (administration), Louise Jargowsky (treasurer), George Gaige (always ready to help in any situation, such as audio-visual needs and even playing Martin Luther for our Marty party), Chris Sterner (congregation vice president) and Paul Crowther (secretary), all of whom have been a big help to him.

Finance Report: The October finance report was presented and explained by Chris Sterner. Motion by George Gaige to approve; second by Helen Ida Moyer; unanimous approval.

Old Business:

Call Committee: Paul Crowther reported on search progress to date. Of eight pastoral candidates identified by the Synod, one chose to follow a call to another church, one chose to consider a different Synod, two were not interested because of either salary requirements or the location in our state, one made a second contact with Synod because of continuing interest since their first contact in July, two candidate interviews scheduled for October were rescheduled due to death in family of Synod rep, and one candidate never followed up and failed to respond to messages left with them. One rescheduled October interview yielded great interest by Synod, and we are hopeful for a positive follow-up by that candidate.

Advent Worship Folder: The Worship & Music Survey revealed that two-thirds of the Congregation feel that our current Service is confusing with all the paper and inserts, and that it is not visitor-friendly. The recommendation from the Worship and Music Team was to have one complete weekly worship folder containing the liturgy, the readings, the hymns, and all the bulletin information (servers, announcements, etc.). The LT approved this recommendation and requested a draft version to review at the November meeting. A draft worship folder was presented that places the entire worship service into a single printed document, eliminating multiple individual sheets of paper that presently accompany the hymnal. At last month's LT meeting, Pastor William had suggested that Advent would be a good time to transition to the new Worship folder. The LT is encouraging feedback from the Congregation regarding this new format.

Marty Party: The "Marty Party" held in the outdoor pavilion last month to celebrate the Reformation was successful, well attended, and demonstrated the value of the pavilion for social events enjoyed by the congregation and even the community. Everyone agreed that we need to continue identifying events that can be held outdoors, get them scheduled, then get the word out to the congregation and the community.

Evangelism Team Update: The team met the previous week to discuss strategies that are working and what's not. The Blessing of the Animals last month was a success; the outdoor services in the pavilion seem to be something that the congregation enjoyed; the previously mentioned Marty Party, Pastor's spirituality class, all these efforts seem to be working.

Invitation cards were less successful, possibly because of reluctance to hand them out to people. What was emphasized was the benefit of placing banners roadside announcing upcoming events, as well as the creation of an annual events calendar that is advertised locally well in advance of the events. Our Sunday morning greeters have been encouraged to ask new visitors how they heard about us so that we can make better use of those methods. There was a suggestion that targeted mailings to new arrivals to our community could be beneficial. Chris and Pat will speak to their realtors to learn how that information might be obtained.

Retired Pastor Tom Frost has provided three dates (Jan. 15, 22, 29) that he is available to give a presentation at Grace and Glory about his experience on the Camino de Santiago. Pastor William suggested that a viewing of the film "The Way" in advance of his talk would provide us with background on the Camino pilgrimage. Mike Montgomery will explore audio-visual logistics to make this viewing possible.

Stewardship Campaign: Congregation response to our campaign has been tremendous and we are already at 97% of last year's commitments, including two new commitments. 70% of commitments received represented an increased pledge amount.

All Saints Day: This very moving worship service was well attended with numerous people stepping up to share stories about their loved one's passing.

New Business:

Interim Pastor William Strong's employment contract expires in December and our Leadership Team is in 100% agreement to extend his contract another six months. Pastor Strong expressed his desire to continue in this role, which is so important to Grace and Glory as we continue through the call process to identify a new full-time pastor. The length of Pastor's contract would be adjusted accordingly should a call be extended during this interim.

In light of the amount of paper that is generated in the church, we have explored the possibilities of utilizing our waste management service to provide recycling services in addition to our regular trash pickup. Chris reported that the additional fee for that service is \$10 per month. Pat recommended that this fee is reasonable and will actually provide for recycling of cans and plastic in addition to paper. It's understood that the provision of one or more recycling bins inside the church and educating the congregation of what's recyclable, and what's not, will be important.

Louise Jargowsky has offered to collect money toward staff Christmas gifts through Dec.22. Announcement will be made to the congregation directly as well as in the Grace Notes that if they wish to participate, they should reach out to Louise.

The Fluvanna Leadership Development Program utilized the Grace & Glory classroom property for a late change to their usual location at another area church. It was our first experience providing a space for them and everything went very well.

IHS Fund Balance: Grace & Glory has been carrying a fund balance in our accounts that was originally intended for our support of the Interfaith Humanitarian Sanctum (IHS), a local non-profit which assisted in meeting immediate and unmet needs of long distance, indigent and underfunded patients and caregivers when no other opportunities exist. Typically, those patients were receiving care at UVA Hospital. With the passing of the director of IHS, the Grace & Glory program supported by the donated funds came to an end, with the remaining funds unspent. After lengthy discussion about how best to utilize the remaining fund balance, a motion was made by Paul, seconded by Pat, with unanimous LT approval, to donate the remaining \$ 1,356.28 balance to The Alyssa House, located in Charlottesville. The Alyssa House, named for ten year old Alyssa Grace Divers, provides free housing and care to families of children in medical crisis. The Alyssa House serves immuno-compromised children receiving extensive medical care at UVA Children's Hospital.

2025 Spending Plan: Chris Sterner reports that the 2025 spending plan is almost complete, awaiting additional information on our Ministry Team needs, staff salaries, and Synod benevolence contribution amount for the year. It's expected that a draft spending plan will be available for review in December, to be presented to the congregation in late January.

2024 Performance Reviews: Self-assessments have been provided to paid staff, with the exception of Pastor, intended to be completed by Dec. 6. Staff receiving self-assessments are the office manager, bookkeeper, music director and soloist.

Shepherding Program: Pat proposed this program, familiar to him from his church in Arkansas, which breaks the congregation into small geographic units of 5-7 families or members, with a shepherd in each group. The group would stay in touch with each other in order to easily become aware of the needs of any member of the group. As needs arise, the shepherd would reach out to whomever may be able to assist in addressing that need. In the absence of a Parish Life and Care ministry, this is thought to be an easy way to communicate and help each other out in a time of need.

Next Leadership Team meeting is December 18th.

Submitted by Paul Crowther, Secretary

Greening the Church

Do you love to decorate for the holidays? Please join our group on Wednesday, December 11, at 9:30 am to green the church. If you are unable to join us but have greens for decorating, we would appreciate them. The greens may be dropped off anytime from December 8-11 at the back of the church.

Linda Candea

This and That

Kitchen Announcement

Items have appeared from 'out of nowhere' on the kitchen counters and in the cabinets and drawers. Such as aluminum pie tins and roasting pan, an electric kettle (we already had one) dishes and cups. Please DO NOT leave anything without contacting Lynn Wirth first. My phone number is 908-672-3288 and email is lynnrwirth@hotmail.com.

December Fellowship Time

Our December Fellowship will be Sunday the 15th. As we did last year, we will be having a cookie exchange. Bring your favorite cookies, homemade or store bought, to share. Be sure to bring a container or bag to take home samples from the table.

Lynn Wirth

Happy Face

I would like to thank everyone who supported the Happy Face toy drive. This year we have 238 children scheduled to attend the party on December 14th. When I dropped off the last boxes I was thanked by Mary Kidd, toy coordinator, for the generosity of Grace and Glory. Volunteers are needed at the Happy Face Party on Saturday, December 14th from 10:00 – 12:30 at Central Elementary School. Please contact Lynn Wirth at lynnrwirth@hotmail.com or 908-672-3288 if you can help.

Also, thanks to those who offered to help with the coat setup. It is a huge job, and I couldn't do it without your help.

Lynn Wirth

Women at Grace & Glory Bible Study

Our Bible Study group will be meeting at **11 am on December 16**, the third Monday of the month at the church. We shall be doing a special Advent Devotional entitled “In God’s garden” which focuses on **what fig trees teach us about Advent!** These amazing trees and the fruit they bear have a great deal to teach us about what it means **to watch, wait and prepare**. Fig trees are an important symbol in the Bible for God’s relationship with God’s people. They appear many times in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament Jesus has several quite famous encounters with fig trees. He tells us to learn from the fig trees in our midst – to keep bearing fruit, remain vigilant and prepare for his coming. During our time together we shall look at all four weeks of the Advent Devotional, which is in the **November-December issue of the *Gather* magazine**. Hope that you can join us for this most interesting devotional focusing on fig trees!

Submitted by Helen Ida Moyer

Red Cross Blood Drive

Grace & Glory is hosting a blood drive on Saturday, December 14th from 10 - 2.

Click on the link below to register to donate blood: <https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/drive-results?zipSponsor=22963>

Volunteers are needed on Friday, Dec. 13th at 5 pm to set up for the blood drive and at 2 pm on Saturday to reset the church for Sunday's service.

Please call or text Paula Tomko at 434-960-2983 if you can help.

Prison Ministry

Thank you to all those who contributed to our prison ministry (GraceInside). Our church collected 16 toiletry kits, 2 shopping bags filled with an assortment of cards and stationary, and \$50.00 in cash donations.

Colleen Sterner

OWLS Christmas Party

The OWLS (Older Wiser Lutheran Seniors) Out to Lunch Bunch will gather for Christmas fellowship on Tuesday, December 3rd, at noon at Rhetts Bar & Grill, 134 Wood Ridge Terrace, Zion Crossroads. Bring a \$10.00 wrapped gift. Santa will be there to share Christmas joy. Seating is limited to 24 people, so RSVP to Linda Beaudoin at (434) 589-2654 or lmbeaudoin@aol.com.



Women’s Breakfast

Please join us on Saturday, December 21st at 9 AM at Moose’s by the Creek in Charlottesville. Please RSVP to Julie Dwyer at 434-981-5613 or ejmartell1968@yahoo.com.

Men’s Breakfast

The men will be meeting for breakfast at IHOP at Zion Crossroads at 9 am on Saturday, December 14th. Please RSVP to Denny Avers at denny@avers.net or 434-989-9273

GRACE & GLORY FINANCIAL REPORT

OCTOBER 2024

YTD OCTOBER 2024

INCOME:

General	\$13,475
Building	\$2,420
Memorial	\$435
Designated	\$1,885
<u>Total Donations</u>	\$18,215
Other	\$203
<u>Total</u>	\$18,418

INCOME:

General	\$130,695
Building	\$17,706
Memorial	\$605
Designated	\$9,271
<u>Total Donations</u>	\$158,277
Other	\$2,336
<u>Total</u>	\$160,613

EXPENSES:

General	\$9,391
Building	\$2,659
Memorial	\$0
Designated	\$1,346
<u>Total</u>	\$13,396

EXPENSES:

General	\$97,623
Building	\$26,590
Memorial	\$0
Designated	\$7,376
<u>Total</u>	\$131,589

GENERAL CHANGE	\$4,287
BUILDING CHANGE	-\$239

GENERAL CHANGE	\$35,408
BUILDING CHANGE	-\$8,884

December Birthdays

Cameron O'Dell	2	Rick Beaudoin	12
Linda Bolling	5	Kyle Jenkins	19
Julie Dwyer	7	Carol Parsons	25
Joyce Long	9	Robert Candea	28
Terry Weese	11	Walt Vetter	31

Grace Notes

Please remember to submit your information for the January issue of Grace Note by Tuesday, December 24th to LeRoy Moyer at lee_helen@embarqmail.com.

Poinsettias for Christmas Eve

Grace and Glory is accepting poinsettia orders to decorate the sanctuary for Christmas Eve. Each poinsettia is \$17. Please make checks payable to “Grace and Glory” and note “poinsettia” in the memo line. Please fill out the form below with an optional dedication, which will appear in the Christmas Eve bulletin.



Orders must be received by Sunday, December 16th. You can submit your order form with your Sunday offering or place it in the church office mailbox located in the alcove with the photocopier.

If you have any questions, please contact Cindy in the church office at admin@graceandglory.org or 434-589-2217.

Name:

Number of poinsettias ordered:

Total cost: \$

Dedication (optional) for bulletin:
(example: given in memory of...or in honor of...)

*Please take home your poinsettia following the service. If you will not be in attendance on Christmas Eve, please let the church office know so that other arrangements can be made.

	December 1	December 8	December 15	December 22	December 24	December 29
Minister	William Strong	William Strong	William Strong	William Strong	William Strong	William Strong
Assisting Minister	Richard Rognlie	Paula Tomko	Keith Weimer	Kevin Davidson	TBD	Richard Rognlie
Usher	Gabi Ford	Louise Jargowsky	Paul Crowther	Jan Crowther	TBD	Gabi Ford
Greeters	Chris & Colleen Sterner	Robert Candea	Priscilla Fennell	Louise Jargowsky	Lynn Wirth	Julie & Joel Dwyer
Altar Guild	Vikki McCloud	Julie Dwyer	Carol Parsons	Terry Weese	Terry Weese	Mary Louise Rognlie
Tellers	Keith Weimer Mary Louise Rognlie	Paula Tomko Pat McCloud	Paul Crowther Keith Weimer	Terry Weese Jan Crowther	TBD	Paula Tomko Mary Louise Rognlie

Sunday Helpers

We all give thanks to our faithful Sunday helpers who provide our music, set up the altar and other worship aids, provide our sound system and count our offerings and to those who organize and secure our readers and worship assistants, greeters and ushers, hospitality providers, sound system providers and tellers. Please volunteer to help with the service.

Ushers/Greeters

Julie Dwyer – (434) 981-5613

Lectors and Assisting Ministers

Paula Tomko – (434) 326-5533

Altar Guild

Julie Dwyer – (434) 981-5613

Tellers

Paula Tomko – (434) 960-2983

If you have signed up for a duty and find that you cannot make it for some reason, please arrange to find a replacement.

Bulletin, Office, and Calendar Requests

E-mail Cindy Anderson in the church office at admin@graceandglory.org, or call her at (434) 589-2217 to:

1. Have an announcement included in the Sunday bulletin
2. Schedule the office meeting spaces
3. Have an activity or meeting included on the church calendar. The calendar is posted on our website (www.graceandglory.church).

Prayer List Requests

You may submit prayer requests to Cindy Anderson at admin@graceandglory.org. They will be included on the list for 4 weeks. You may resubmit a request to keep them on for an additional 4 weeks.

Grace and Glory Website

The website, www.graceandglory.church, includes a great deal of information that is updated regularly.



Grace & Glory

LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sunday Worship at 10 AM
Grace & Glory Sanctuary
on Facebook Live

683 Thomas Jefferson Parkway
Palmyra, VA 22963



Newsletter Deadline is **December 24, 2024**
to LeRoy Moyer at
Lee_Helen@embarqmail.com



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Palmyra, VA 22963