

Grace Notes



January 2025 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

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Phone: 804-517-2296

Good People,

I write these words to you all, dearly beloved, on Christmas Eve and prompted by Linus and Charlie Brown, I have been thinking about the “meaning” of Christmas. What does it mean that God – creator of everything – was born in a stable – with nothing? What does it mean that the power that keeps the stars and planets spinning in their courses took form among us as a newborn child? Just what is this mysterious connection between helplessness and power, weakness and strength, despair and hope, darkness and light, death, and life? What does it mean that God always, always, and already, comes to us wrapped in unexpectedness and surprise?

This past Sunday, after serving at Grace & Glory, I drove down to south side Virginia to preach at a little country church. Buffalo Presbyterian was built in the late 1800’s and stands at the end of a dirt road. Built of wood and painted white, with two potbellied stoves and a simple wooden pulpit inside, Buffalo remains stoically faithful in the face of dwindling attendance and resources. The piano player that Sunday, a young friend of mine, brought his wife and their new baby.

Throughout the service – and during my sermon – the baby fussed and squirmed the way hungry babies do. The mother was embarrassed but everyone else was delighted. It had been a long time since a baby was heard in that church and the sound filled folks with a sense of both nostalgia and of new possibility.

Yesterday and today, I have been spending some time with Barbara Haas, a member here at Grace & Glory, doing my best to help her with her dying. Her breathing is not easy, and I know that she is anxious and afraid, yet when she holds my hand and looks in my eyes she seems to find some comfort and joy. This is a mystery to me since I do not know Barbara very well and clearly she does not recognize me now. So who does she see when she looks at me? Whose hand does she think she’s holding? Surely, not mine. Yet, who else – who else could possibly be in the room?

Barbara reminds me that our true lives are hidden in Christ – hers and mine. We live so much of our lives thinking we are in control that we forget that in our beginning and in our ending – in our being born and in our dying – we are surrounded by mystery. Barbara Haas stands on the edge of eternity, wrapped in the wideness of God’s love, facing a new possibility.

Holding a baby in my arms one day and the hand of a dying woman the next, I wonder about the meaning of all this love and suffering, this sacrifice and delight. What holds us all together, Barbara and the baby and I? What is the secret thread that intertwines our lives? I don’t know. I can only guess. But it seems to me that it has something to do with the real meaning of Christmas. And to paraphrase the liner notes of one of my favorite Christmas albums by John Fahey, I don’t think Christmas really has much to do “with Christmas trees, presents, Santa Claus,” or singing familiar carols. “The New Possibility is rather the gift of reconciliation between God and [people]. [God] is for all [people] at all times and places...It is Christmas all year; let us rejoice ecstatically....”

It is Christmas all year; so let us rejoice ecstatically in our new possibility! Amen.

Peace and All Good, - Pastor William

Entering the New Year

The New Year is the perfect time to reflect on where we've been as a Congregation as well as ponder what the New Year will bring us, not only as a Congregation but as individuals. For we as individuals are the Church. Not the entity known as Grace and Glory Inc. of Palmyra, or the Virginia Synod, or the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It is we the people who are the church. It is we who will shape the future of our Congregation as well as the greater Church. So then, what are our resolutions for the New Year? I believe any resolution has to begin with prayer and I particularly like this prayer by *Vinita Hampton Wright*, award-winning author and workshop and retreat leader who served as a book editor for more than thirty years.

God of all time,
help us enter the New Year quietly,
thoughtful of who we are to ourselves and to others,
mindful that our steps make an impact
and our words carry power.

May we walk gently.
May we speak only after we have listened well.

Creator of all life,
help us enter the New Year reverently,
aware that you have endowed
every creature and plant, every person and habitat
with beauty and purpose.

May we regard the world with tenderness.
May we honor rather than destroy.

Lover of all souls,
help us enter the New Year joyfully,
willing to laugh and dance and dream,
remembering our many gifts with thanks
and looking forward to blessings yet to come.

May we welcome your lavish love.
May we cast off the small, vindictive god our fears have made.
May the grace and peace of Christ bless us now and in the days ahead.

J. Patrick McCloud
Congregation President

Save the Dates

On **January 22nd at 1:30**, Pastor Tom Frost will lead a discussion regarding the Camino de Santiago. The Camino de Santiago, or the Way of St. James, is a network of pilgrimage routes that lead to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Spain. The cathedral is believed to contain the remains of the apostle Saint James the Greater, one of Jesus's closest apostles. Pastor Frost recently walked a portion Europe's oldest, busiest, and most well-known pilgrimage route. As a prelude to Pastor Frost's presentation, we will be showing the movie *The Way*, starring Martin Sheen, on **January 15th at 1:30**. Please join us and bring a friend.

-The Evangelism Team

Leadership Team Meeting Summary

The Leadership Team met on Dec. 18, 2024

Pastor's Report: Pastor William shares that this has been a very rich time for him personally and hopes that it is for the church as well. The gradual increase in attendance and membership has been gratifying. He remains busy with hospital visitations and preparation for the numerous upcoming holiday services planned.

President's Report: Pat is pleased that in the past 10 months we have received four new members. The Stewardship campaign has been very successful, exceeding our goal for this year, and for the third straight month income has exceeded that of the previous year.

Finance Report: The November finance report was presented by Chris Sterner. A small bookkeeping error continues to be pursued but is small and not a concern. Motion by Paul to approve; second by George. Unanimous approval.

Old Business:

2025 Spending Plan: Chris presented the 2025 spending plan draft. It was suggested that the Property Team meet to discuss our readiness for unexpected expenses that may arise as our building is over 10 years old. Chris asks that anyone aware of expenses not already identified speak to him in advance of our annual congregation meeting in January, which will include presentation of the spending plan to the congregation.

Bookkeeper position: Our bookkeeper, Stephanie Wirth, has stated that her full-time job is making it more difficult to keep up with her responsibilities at Grace & Glory and is agreeable to our seeking a replacement. Chris has been in contact with a promising prospect that appears qualified and affordable. Stephanie has suggested a possible candidate as well.

Shepherding Program: Pat described the Shepherding Program as a way for everyone in our congregation to keep in touch with one another. The concept is that the congregation would be divided into flocks with each flock assigned a shepherd, who is in turn supported by the Pastor. Notes, cards, calls, emails or texts might be exchanged with members on special occasions or when they have unexpected or prolonged absence from church; support is offered during a member's illness or time of grief; a shepherd's welcome smile may greet a flock member on Sunday morning; or your shepherd may just be someone to talk to when times are tough. A description of the Shepherding Program and invitation to serve as a shepherd will be announced at an upcoming worship service.

Call Committee update: No new information regarding potential candidates has come from the Synod, but the committee has been advised that in anticipation of new candidate interest occurring on short notice, they should be well prepared for a candidate visit and interview. A review of our Ministry Site Profile should be conducted in case there is any need to update our church information.

Advent Worship Folder feedback: Response by the congregation has been positive about the new Sunday worship folder. With less paper to handle and shuffle through during the service, people can follow the service more easily. It has also been observed that visitors are less likely to lose their place during different portions of the service with this new format.

Worship Attendance records: Conversation continues on the most efficient way to track our Sunday worship attendance. The use of our attendance books and head counts by the ushers have their drawbacks, yet accurate member attendance is important information that is shared with the ELCA. It was agreed that starting in 2025 we would use the attendance register during Lent (6 weeks) and Advent (4 weeks). The rest of the year we will rely on a headcount only.

Evangelism Team update: At their December meeting, the Evangelism team recommended that we invite the members of the three area Methodist churches to Pastor Tom Frost's presentation on January 22 about his pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago, as well as the film presentation of *The Way* the week before. The church secretary will send invitations to those three churches after the New Year.

It was decided that we will conduct a small mass mailing in our area for our Easter service in order to measure the response of that method of advertising. Both the Christmas Eve service and the Blue Christmas on Dec. 21 were advertised in the Fluvanna Review, on Facebook and on our website.

An annual calendar of special events is being drafted that will be issued in January, providing ample notice of each event. Appropriate advertising will take place in advance of the events.

Stewardship Campaign update: A total of 28 pledges have been received so far totaling \$167,700, an increase of \$23,258 over last year and exceeding our goal.

Annual Reviews: Self assessments are being completed by the paid staff in preparation for their annual reviews. We have already received valuable feedback from these self-assessments which will be acted on.

Recycling: After contacting our trash service contractor, we learned that they cannot provide recycling service at the church location because it is outside of their current recycling route. Chris Sterner agreed to take home any paper for recycling while Pastor agreed to handle any cans or bottles, and he committed to putting a container out to collect these items. Pat said he could recycle any cardboard.

Submitted by Paul Crowther

Women at Grace and Glory Bible Study

The WAGG Bible Study group will be meeting the third Monday of the month, **at 11 am on January 20** at the church. We shall be starting a new three-part Bible study about **"Receiving grace: A study of Ephesians."** In our first session we shall discuss what grace is and whether grace is real: in the gospels, Jesus never even uses the word. It is Paul who brought the term "grace" into Christian life and thought. In Session One, we shall focus on how Grace offers us a way to live from love despite hardship. In Session Two, we turn to how God's power works in us, and in Session Three, our discussion will center on how we can live as children of the light. These Bible studies are in the September-October 2024 and in the November-December 2024 issues of the *Gather* magazine. Hope that you will be able to join us for a special time of fellowship and Bible study together on Monday January 20 at 11 am at the church. Right now, as we transition from an old to a new year, rather than focusing on how we fall short, we can indeed remember **God's continual gift of grace.**

Submitted by Helen Ida Moyer

Red Attendance Books

Our Constitution requires documentation of attendance to maintain active status as a member. The Leadership Team has decided that we will put out attendance books twice a year. The first time will be during Lent. The second time will be during Advent. They will be out for each Sunday of those liturgical seasons (6 weeks for Lent, 4 for Advent) and we will urge members to sign during these seasons. The rest of the year we will not use the Attendance books, but we will still take a headcount and urge visitors to sign the guest book.

-The Leadership Team

Grace and Glory Church Sign

For some time now our Office Manager Cindy has been changing the church sign at Pastor William's direction. The Leadership Team feels that this is above and beyond Cindy's job description and we have decided to bring back the volunteer group that operated in the past. If you are interested in volunteering to do this task, please contact Pastor or Pat McCloud.

The Leadership Team also wants the Congregation to understand the protocol for changing the sign. The protocol is for Pastor and / or the Church President to give direction to the Team responsible for changing the sign. Input for messages can come from any Ministry or any individual but it should be directed to Pastor and the President. Typically, our messages are directed towards Worship & Music, Evangelism, and Social Justice and Outreach. Pastor and/ or I will indicate when we would like the sign changed, what specifically the message will say, and how long we want it displayed. Please note that Advent / Christmas, and Lent / Easter are busy times of the Church year so you can anticipate a number of changes during these seasons.

-The Leadership Team

A Wonderful Welcome



Many thanks to Jeff and Carol Odell for the handmade boxwood wreaths! Jeff was so kind to make these wreaths for our doors, and they couldn't have been more beautiful! We really appreciate their talents!!

Another Successful Blood Drive



A big thank you to everyone who helped with the pre/post set-up and donations of blood. On Saturday, December 14th, Grace & Glory sponsored another blood drive for the Red Cross, and we were able to provide 24 units to help our community resources. This is above our previous average collection of 21 units, and this is a great way for us to bring the community into Grace & Glory as about 1/3 of our donors are affiliated with Grace & Glory and the rest come from the community. Our next blood drive will be Monday, March 10, 2025, from 2 - 6 pm. You can make an appointment at this [link](#).

Older Wiser Lutheran Seniors (OWLS)

The OWLS will welcome the New Year with fellowship and lunch on Tuesday, January 7th at 12:00 at the Asian Cafe at 265 Turkeysag Trail. Let Linda Beaudoin know if you plan to attend. 434-589-2564 or lmbeaudoin@aol.com.



Women's Breakfast

Please join us on Saturday, January 18th at 9 AM at Maple Pine Restaurant 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, January 11th. Please RSVP to Denny Avers at denny@avers.net or 434-989-9273.

January Birthdays

Lynn Wirth	6
Linda Myers	24
Helen Ida Moyer	31

GRACE & GLORY FINANCIAL REPORT

NOVEMBER 2024

INCOME:

General	\$15,586
Building	\$995
Memorial	\$20
Designated	\$584
<u>Total Donations</u>	\$17,185
Other	\$123
<u>Total</u>	\$17,308

EXPENSES:

General	\$7,901
Building	\$2,659
Memorial	\$0
Designated	\$1,992
<u>Total</u>	\$12,552

GENERAL CHANGE \$7,808

BUILDING CHANGE -\$1,664

YTD NOVEMBER 2024

INCOME:

General	\$145,495
Building	\$18,651
Memorial	\$625
Designated	\$9,855
<u>Total Donations</u>	\$174,626
Other	\$2,460
<u>Total</u>	\$177,086

EXPENSES:

General	\$105,525
Building	\$29,249
Memorial	\$0
Designated	\$9,368
<u>Total</u>	\$144,142

GENERAL CHANGE \$42,430

BUILDING CHANGE -\$10,598

Bishop Eaton's message on Syria

In the ELCA, we recognize that some of our members are of Syrian nationality or heritage. Through ecumenical bodies such as the Middle East Council of Churches, we have long been in relationship with the Syrian Christian communities, which date back to the earliest days of the church and whose members live and worship today as a religious minority that is not always welcomed or accepted. These Christians hope that a new Syria will include a place of safety, security, and freedom of worship for them and their neighbors. Syria's diversity is integral to the fabric of Syrian society and should be protected.

In this Advent season of expectation, please join me in praying for all the people of Syria. We pray that those who have walked in suffering, oppression and occupation will be liberated by our liberating God. We pray for political prisoners to be set free, for families to be reunited, for those wronged to secure justice, and for all Syrians to live, work and worship in peace. We pray also for those who mourn the dead and missing, and who fear the uncertain future.

If your prayer moves you to action, I encourage you to give to the Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) Middle East appeal, which will continue to send aid to our partners, the Middle East Council of Churches, ACT Alliance, and the Lutheran World Federation, as they support those in need in Syria in the coming days.

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, -- Presiding Bishop Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Grace Notes

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

	January 5	January 12	January 19	January 26	February 2
Minister	William Strong	TBD	William Strong	William Strong	TBD
Assisting Minister	Kevin Davidson	Keith Weimer	Paula Tomko	Kevin Davidson	Richard Rognlie
Usher	Carol Parsons	Louise Jargowsky	Paul Crowther	Jan Crowther	Carol Parsons
Greeters	Pat McCloud	Lynn Wirth	Joel Dwyer	Louise Jargowsky	Priscilla Fennell
Altar Guild	Vikki McCloud	Julie Dwyer	Julie Dwyer	Terry Weese	Mary Louise Rognlie
Tellers	Keith Weimer Pat McCloud	Paula Tomko Vikki McCloud	Paul Crowther Mary Louise Rognlie	Terry Weese Jan Crowther	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.

January 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3 9am Cindy in Office 6:30pm AA Meeting	4
5 10am WORSHIP - Sanctuary, FB Live 11:30am Choir Rehearsal	6 9am Cindy in Office	7 12pm OWLS Luncheon- Asian Café 6:30pm AA Meeting 7:30pm Handbell Rehearsal	8 9am Cindy in Office	9	10 9am Cindy in Office 4pm Finance Team Mtg. (Zoom) 6:30pm AA Meeting	11 9am Men's monthly breakfast - IHOP
12 10am WORSHIP - Sanctuary, FB Live 11:30am Choir Rehearsal	13 9am Cindy in Office 11am LWR Quilters	14 6:30pm AA Meeting 7:30pm Handbell Rehearsal	15 9am Cindy in Office 1:30pm "The Way" movie 7pm Leadership Team	16	17 9am Cindy in Office 6:30pm AA Meeting	18 9am Women's Breakfast - Maple Pine Breakfast & Thai Restaurant
19 10am WORSHIP - Sanctuary, FB Live Annual Meeting & Coffee Hour after Service 11:30am Choir Rehearsal	20 9am Cindy in Office 11am WAGG Bible Study	21 6:30pm AA Meeting 7:30pm Handbell Rehearsal	22 9am Cindy in Office 1:30pm Pastor Tom Frost "Camino de Santiago" presentation	23	24 Grace Notes Submissions Due Today 9am Cindy in Office 6:30pm AA Meeting	25
26 10am WORSHIP - Sanctuary, FB Live 11:30am Choir Rehearsal	27 9am Cindy in Office 11am LWR Quilters	28 6:30pm AA Meeting	29 9am Cindy in Office	30	31 9am Cindy in Office 6:30pm AA Meeting	

Indoor services: Masks and social distancing are optional. Remember: The most up-to-date information and details about events listed is available on our website calendar at www.graceandglory.church . If you have a need for the office or additional information that should be included on the calendar, please send the information to the church office at admin@graceandglory.org, or call and leave a message at 434-589-2217.



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 **January 24, 2024**
to LeRoy Moyer at
Lee_Helen@embarqmail.com



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