

# Grace Notes

Published Monthly



Grace Lutheran Church  
745 S. Ingraham Avenue  
Lakeland, Florida 33801

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Grace Lutheran Church is to  
Share God's Love  
With each other, our community, and the world.



### Pastor's Column

*"And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth."* John 1:14

Wow! Where did 2011 go? We are already in the season of Advent, the Christmas baking has begun, some of us have our Christmas shopping finished, and family visits are scheduled. Now we're heading at warp speed into a typically busy and stressful – and often enjoyable – time of parties, cooking, shopping, wrapping, and traveling. It can be a magical time, but it also can be a "Bah! Humbug!" season. Do you look forward to Advent and Christmas, or are you filled with dread and anxiety?

Many years ago, I took a course called, "Stop the Christmas Machine." What an eye-opening class it was! Even Christians who think they are focusing in the right places – on Jesus and how a tiny baby changed the world – can get caught up in the breathless rushing of preparation and trying to have the perfect holiday. Stopping the Christmas Machine means that you have to stop the mindless running around and get off the train. You have to focus your sights on Who and Why and not How we celebrate. We must focus on the Christ in Christmas.

I don't mean sticking a sign that says "Keep Christ in Christmas" in the middle of your huge Christmas light display of snowmen and Santas and trains and bouncy Disney characters in winter clothing.

Rather, I mean setting aside some of the decorating and cutting back on baking, entertaining and even shopping.

After all, the greatest gift we've ever received was free: The love of God in the baby Jesus.



This time of year, what we need most is time to focus on the Christ-child. Here are a few suggestions. Spend some extra time in prayer each day, thanking God for the precious, irreplaceable gifts in your life. Read four chapters of the book of Mark each week in Advent and meet for a sack lunch on Thursdays at noon to talk about it. Choose a family project and make or buy gifts for someone in need. Come to Sunday morning Bible Study at 9:00 a.m. for *The Journey* and walk the road to Bethlehem with Mary, Joseph, the shepherds and the wise men. These are all ways to put Christ back in Christmas and behold the glory of the Savior, full of grace and truth.

Christmas love and blessings from our home to yours ~

*Pastor Carol & Steve Solovitz*

## Praying into Long-Range Planning

*“Pray lots and listen lots.”*

I am re-reading *Discerning Your Congregation’s Future*. It is a tried-and-true book by Roy M. Oswald and Robert E. Friedrich, Jr., of the Alban Institute. What I like most about the book is that it’s not a cut-and-paste business formula that is adapted for churches. Rather, it is a strategic, spiritual approach to guide churches and leaders through the challenges of a rapidly changing present and hard-to-predict future. As we at Grace move into the long-range planning process, there is a lot of mental and spiritual work ahead of us. Basically, it means that our congregation will need to think deeply about where we are and where we want to be in 5 to 10 years. It means that we will need to devote at least a year to intense discussions and decision-making; that means more congregational meetings. Most of all, it means that we need to devote ourselves to our Christian callings as we design a vision of Grace’s future. How do we do that? *Pray lots and listen lots*. This is not just a process for a few leaders, but it is for all of us of every age and skill. We may not all be able to be in the thick of things, but we all have the ability and yes, the obligation, to pray for our congregation, our synod, and the whole Christian Church on earth. So please, ***pray lots and listen lots***, and let’s see where God leads us.

**Grace Annual Meeting – January 22, 2012**



**Following worship and potluck meal**

## Tuesday, November 8, 2011 All-Committee Meeting Summary

**Devotions:** Pastor Carol opened with a reading from Ephesians 4 and guided those attending through centering prayer exercise.

**Discussion:** After all attending introduced themselves, Pastor Carol asked Committees and Boards to gather, discuss the following questions and identify three of them as priorities.

- a. In this congregation, in what ways are we becoming more faithful to the life and teachings of Christ?
- b. How well are we making disciples out of our members?
- c. In what ways are we good stewards of the gifts and resources available to this congregation?
- d. How is what we are about as a congregation related to God's Kingdom issues, rather than just keeping an institution alive?
- e. In what ways do we make room for the Holy Spirit to continually revitalize and refocus our congregation?
- f. How does this committee or board work with the congregation's greater mission?

**Reporting:** Each committee reported on their responses to the questions they chose. Groups also shared what they are working on and how it relates to the congregation as a whole. A lot of good sharing happened among groups. For example, the Worship Band will assist the CDC at their First Friday downtown event, providing music while the CDC hands out cookies and hot chocolate.

**Conclusion:** Pastor Carol asked that committees brainstorm ideas, suggestions, hopes and dreams which will be shared at a later date. This input will inform the long-range planning process. All-Committee meeting adjourned with scripture and prayer.

## Upcoming Bible Studies – Sign up in Activity Book in Narthex



1) *The Journey: Walking the Road to Bethlehem* – Sunday Mornings in Advent. This weekly study starts at 9:00 a.m. on November 27 and continues for the first three Sundays of December. Meet in the Social Hall. Bring your Bible and the resource book *The Journey* by Adam Hamilton to the social hall. Book cost is \$12; an Advent devotional book on *The Journey* is also available for \$7.

2) *Advent Bible Reading Challenge*: Read the entire book of Mark month. The Church calendar begins with Advent on November 27, when we enter Lectionary Year B and texts from the Gospel of Mark. Here is Pastor's challenge: Let's read the entire Gospel of Mark. There are only 16 chapters in Mark, so let's read four chapters a week. Then we can get together and talk about them over a sack lunch at noon on Thursdays. Sign up in the Activity Book.

Here's the reading plan:

December 1: Mark 1 – 4; December 8: Mark 5 – 8; December 15: Mark 9-12;  
December 22: Mark 13-16

3) *Crossways, Section 6: Paul and his Letters, the Catholic Letters, and Revelation* – Mondays at 6:30 p.m. and Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. beginning January 16 and 18. This will be the final section of Crossways, with about 20 people finishing the entire Bible. What a joy it is to study God's Word together as the risen Lord opens to us the Holy Scriptures!

4) *Listening for God, volume 3, Book Study* – Meet at noon on the third Saturday of each month to discuss short stories about faith issues, by modern authors such as John Cheever, Wendell Berry, Louise Erdrich, and others. A light lunch is provided in the Social Hall. Book is \$14. Study begins on January 21.



***Looking Ahead:***

Please think and pray about participation in these upcoming activities:

- November 27 – First Sunday of Advent: “People, Look East”  
9:00 a.m. – *The Journey* Bible Study, Social Hall
- December 1 – Sack lunch and discussion of Mark 1-4
- December 3 – Grace Craft Fair and Bake Sale, 7:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.  
Decorating Church for Advent and Christmas, 1:00 p.m.
- December 4 – *The Journey*, 9:00 a.m.
- December 8 – Sack lunch and discussion of Mark 5-8, Noon
- December 11 – *The Journey*, 9:00 a.m.
- December 15 – Sack lunch and discussion of Mark 9-12, Noon
- December 17 – Rehearsal for Service of Lessons and Carols, 8:30 - 11:30  
a.m.
- December 18 – *The Journey*, 9:00 a.m.  
Service of Lessons and Carols, 10:00 a.m.  
Thank You Event for Linda Moser, 11:15 a.m.
- December 22 – Sack lunch and discussion of Mark 13-16, Noon
- December 24 – Christmas Eve Worship, 6:00 and 10:00 p.m.
- December 25 – Christmas Day Worship, 10:00 a.m.
- January 7 – Take down Christmas Decorations
- January 8 – Epiphany Kings’ Dinner following worship
- January 22 – Annual Meeting following Worship and Potluck Meal

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***Thank You! Celebration  
for Linda Moser***

**December 18 following worship**

**Come and help us celebrate the very fine, uplifting music and  
worship experiences in the past 18 months that Linda  
has served as Director of Music.**

**Linda’s last Sunday at Grace is Christmas Day.**

**Be sure to express to her your appreciation.**

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## Music News

*“Be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourself in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.” Ephesians 5:18-20*

It is noted that the most famous carol service is the service of Nine Lessons and Carols which historically was done in the United Kingdom and dates back to 1918 even though the structure of this service dates back to Christmas Eve 1880. The service would take place on Christmas Eve and was the official ‘herald trumpet’ of Christmas. The service contained nine Bible lessons that told the Christmas story with a carol or two between each lesson.

On December 18 our Grace choir will present *A Ceremony of Lessons and Carols* by Anna Laura Page and Jean Anne Shafferman with the instrumentation by Lloyd Larson. This tells the story of humanity’s fall from grace in the Garden of Eden through the promise of redemption in the birth of Christ. There will be readers, soloists, duets, ensembles, the choir, congregational singing, and the Nativity scene portrayed. Be sure you plan to come to 10:00 worship on December 18. You will hear and sing most of your favorite Christmas carols/hymns!

The choir is also preparing special anthems for Advent and Christmas Eve. Our Grace choir sings beautifully and each member spends much time and effort preparing music every week. It would be such a blessing for the congregation to make a special point to thank these dedicated members.

It has indeed been a pleasure to journey with them in their walk in understanding the value and message of music in the ELCA. We have each learned something that will last a lifetime and we have each learned to BOLDLY share our love of Christ with one another. May the music and message of Christ’s love continue to bloom and grow at Grace.

Thank you for allowing me to serve Him with you.

With a song in my heart,  
Linda Moser

***Serving in the Church  
in December***

**Assisting Ministers:**

- 12/4 Mary Flekke
- 12/11 Tim Vettrus
- 12/18 Paul Tart
- 12/24 (6:00 p.m.) Kristen Storms  
(10:00 p.m.) Wendy Poffenberger
- 12/25 Steve Solovitz

**Greeters:**

Doug & Evie Anderson

**Ushers:**

- Bea Dennis, Ruth Neidinger
- Larry Becker, Carol Werner
- 12/24 (6 pm) Phyllis Gabriel, Harold  
Childs, Shirley Sawyers  
(10 pm) Mac & Barbara McPeak  
Carol Sawyers
- 12/25 Mac & Barbara McPeak  
Shirley Sawyers, Larry Becker

**Altar Guild:**

- 12/4 Mary Lou Hansen  
Carla McGee
- 12/11 Mabel Carreira  
Phyllis Whidden
- 12/18 Betty Leitenberger  
Brenda Hornickle  
Larry Lawrence
- 12/25 Sue Stark  
Barbara White

**Sound Technicians:**

Paul Tart, Dick Venable &  
David W. Kinder

**Women of the ELCA**

***Morning Circle***

Tuesday, December 6  
Noon - Salad Luncheon  
Fellowship Hall  
Bible study - JoAnn Herrick  
Hostesses - June Clark  
& Ruth Neidinger



***Afternoon Circle***

Wednesday, December 14  
2:00 p.m.  
Fellowship Hall  
Bible study - Meg Menter  
Hostess - Lois Schrader



***Church Women United***

Friday, December 2  
Salvation Army  
New Bethel AME  
2122 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.  
9:30 a.m. - Coffee

**Lost In The Night:  
An Advent Service of Hope  
and Expectation**

A Service of Lessons and Carols  
Lamb of God Lutheran Church  
December 11 at 7 p.m.

Everyone is invited.



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

- 1- Dick Silver  
Ray Williams
- 2- Kadynce Hissem
- 3- Robert Wyatt
- 4- Ruth Neidinger
- 5- Phyllis Gabriel  
Francesca Ittleman
- 8- Tom Magdanz
- 9- Lawrence Mattson
- 10- Robert Mattson  
Jim Hall
- 12- Margaux Hall
- 13- Wilbert Kenny
- 14- Stephanie Iverson  
Ethan Tomlinson
- 15- Jim Clark
- 16- Louise Silver
- 20- Carla McGee
- 22- Carol Sawyers
- 23- Ruby Stahl
- 25- Arline Parvin  
Scott Hutchison  
Immie Beck  
Melanie Buskirk
- 27- Rei Gurd  
Phil Pape

# Happy Anniversary

- 4- Ron & Barbara Amorelli
- 5- Bob & Barbara Hagen
- 11- Ed & Marcia Larrison
- 17- Jim & June Clark
- 19- Mark & Barbara Carpanini

Single Ladies of Grace Dinner  
Tuesday, December 6  
3:30 p.m.  
Deli Delicacies Restaurant  
4110 S. Florida Avenue

All single ladies are invited. Bring a single friend with you for a good time of fellowship and delicious food.

## Have you rocked a baby lately?

The CDC is in need of individuals to spend a couple of hours each week rocking babies. If you can assist, please contact Cathy Bozeman, director of the Child Development Center. You may reach her at 682-6192.





## SOCIAL MINISTRY FOR TALBOT HOUSE

At this time of year, please don't forget the struggling folks of Lakeland who are short of basic necessities. Grace supports Talbot House which is a shelter and training center for the homeless. Talbot House not only provides places to sleep and rest, but also provides meals, clothing, job training, and health services. During the month of December there will be a basket in the narthex to collect underwear, socks and non-perishable food gifts. Remember to shop for BOGOs - buy one, get one. These items are especially important as the weather becomes cooler. Also, if you have recently redecorated your bathrooms and have some good used towels that no longer match your décor, Talbot House would be grateful for those. Your response to the recent food drive sponsored by Thrivent was very successful. Food items are always needed by Talbot House as well as VISTE. Please remember the needs of these organizations and do what you can to help.



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## Child Development Center News

*Let them shout out from the mountaintops.  
Let them give glory to the Lord. Isaiah 42:11-12*

Tis the season to shout the glory of God. Everybody rejoice and remember what the Christmas season is about. God came to be our savior. What a great gift.

On December 2 the CDC will be at First Friday in downtown Lakeland. We have a booth and will be decorating cookies for all who come by. The children will be there to sing for passers-by. Come and see us.

The CDC will be closed for on December 23 & 26 and then again December 30. Regular VPK will resume on January 3, 2012.

Happy Holidays to everyone and we will see everyone in the New Year.

In His Service,  
Ms Cathy



## November Congregation Council Highlights

The Congregation Council met on Tuesday, November 15 at 6:30 p.m. Those present included Mary Flekke, Kristen Storms, David A. Kinder, Wendy Poffenberger, Jim Sawyers, and Barbara McPeak, treasurer and JoAnn Herrick, recording secretary. Pastor Carol joined the group when she returned from vacation. Excused were Sara Jo Fulmer, Barbara Carpanini, Pat Blanchette, and Cleve Hillman.

The Minutes of the October meeting were approved. The treasurer, Barbara McPeak reviewed the financial report for October. Barbara will check with Alicia King, bookkeeper, regarding some of the items. The report was field for audit.

The Pastor joined us and spoke to her report. It is anticipated several people will be received into membership in January. The deacons are doing an excellent job in visitation and Lynda Mack led the Stewardship Campaign. The offerings have almost erased the deficit of late August. The Crossways Bible Studies will finish the New Testament study in early 2012. Pastor Carol will lead a book study during Advent on "The Journey: Walking the Road to Bethlehem" on Sunday mornings at 9 a.m. Her sermons will follow

this study. She has challenged the congregation to read the book of Mark to prepare for Lectionary Year 2, asking them to read four chapters a week. If they wish, they may join her for a bag lunch at the church each Thursday at noon for discussion. The Search Committee for Music Director and Organist has met. There will be a party for Linda Moser after worship on December 18. Brenda Hornickle and Wendy Poffenberger will coordinate the party.

There will be a Christmas party for council members, staff, choir, bells, worship band/ensembles and their significant others at the home of Linda Moser on December 4, beginning at 6 p.m. with a light supper.

The Thanksgiving Eve Service will be held at Grace Lutheran to include members from Reformation Lutheran. Reformation will bring pies and our Worship and Music Committee will supply other refreshments.

Committee Reports:  
CDC - There was a question of whether there are Bylaws or some document stating terms for board members. This will be checked on.

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Continuation from page 11)

Worship & Music - a search committee is working on job descriptions for an organist and for a choir director. The direction will be for two ¼ time positions of 10 hours each.

Social Ministry - The committee will make decisions about a project for December. It was suggested perhaps to request socks and underwear for Talbot House as well as food items as the Talbot House pantry is very low.

Stewardship - The stewardship campaign went well. Total pledges for 2012 to date is \$164,162.00. Although fewer commitment cards have been received this year in comparison to last year, the pledges have increased by \$14,500.00.

The Annual Congregation Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 22. Wendy indicated that she and Tom Mack will provide an Epiphany congregational dinner after worship on January 8.

The next meeting of council will be Tuesday, December 20 at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned.

- JoAnn S. Herrick, Recording Secretary



**Deck the Halls**  
**Saturday,**  
**December 3, 1 p.m**

Plan to join us on Saturday, December 3 at 1 p.m. to decorate the church for the Advent and Christmas season. Please sign up in the activity book to volunteer.

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**Holiday Craft & Bake Sale**  
**Saturday, December 3**  
**7:30 - 1:30 p.m.**

Plan now to join us in the fellowship hall for this event. Members can rent a table for \$10.00 to display and sell your crafts. Grace will also be selling ethnic baked goods and collectable plates. Tell your friends, neighbors, and family about this sale. For non-Grace members the rental rate for a table is \$25.00. This will be a great way to begin your holiday shopping for special gifts as well as baked treats.

## Mark your calendar for Saturday, January 7, 2012

What goes up must come down! Plan to join us on Saturday, January 6, as we pack away the greenery, garlands, candles and creches. Come for fun and fellowship. Sign up in the activity book.



Thank you!

Thanks to all who assisted with Thanksgiving Eve worship. A special round of applause to all those who provided desserts or assisted with set up, serving and clean up for fellowship following the service.

THANK YOU to everyone who purchased a poinsettia to decorate our church. This helps to make our church more beautiful and festive as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Many of these beautiful flowers will also be sent to shut-ins to brighten their day.

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### **Note to Council and all Committees:**

The annual reports are due in the church office on January 3. This is to give time for the church office to compile and duplicate the reports for the annual meeting which is scheduled for January 22. Thank you so much for your cooperation.

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If you would like to become a member of Grace Lutheran Church, please contact Pastor Carol. You may phone her at 686-5585 or email her at [pastor@gracelutheran-lakeland.org](mailto:pastor@gracelutheran-lakeland.org).

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*Christmas Eve Worship*  
*December 24*  
*6 pm & 10 pm*



*Plan now to bring your family and worship together as we celebrate the birth of our savior with this special candlelight service. Also join us on Christmas Day at 10 a.m. for worship.*

Christmas Words

joy  
grace  
hope - love  
faith - peace  
honor - purity  
justice - charity  
courage - loyalty  
goodness - prudence  
sympathy - humility  
fortitude - temperance  
brotherhood - cooperation  
and  
God  
is  
love

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November Attendance

Date	Total
11/6	133
11/13	116
11/20	138



*Merry Christmas to you  
and your family.*

The staff wishes each of you a safe and blessed Christmas and a very prosperous and happy new year filled with God's bountiful blessings.

The church office will be closed on December 23, 26, 27 and 30. Office hours on December 28 and 29 will be from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.



Counting the days & hours  
till your Grace Notes  
information is due on  
**December 11**

**GRACE NOTES**

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**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
745 S. Ingraham Avenue  
Lakeland, FL 33801-5601

Church office (863)686-5585  
Church office fax (863)686-0272  
E-mail: [pastor@gracelutheran-lakeland.org](mailto:pastor@gracelutheran-lakeland.org)  
Child Dev. Center office (863)682-6192  
Editor & Design/Layout Sara Anderson

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**Grace Lutheran Church**  
**745 S. Ingraham Ave.**  
**Lakeland, FL 33801**

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**The Council Representatives**

Mary Flekke	President
Cleve Hillman	Vice President
Barbara Carpanini	Corp. Secretary
Ruth Neidinger	Financial Secretary
Barbara McPeak	Treasurer
JoAnn Herrick	Recording Secretary
Wendy Poffenberger	Child Dev. Board
Kristen Storms	Christian Education
Cleve Hillman	Evangelism
Mary Flekke	Finance
Jim Sawyers	Memorial
Barbara Carpanini	Property
Sara Jo Fulmer	Social Ministry
Kristen Storms	Stewardship
Pat Blanchette	Worship & Music
David A. Kinder	Youth

**Church Staff**

The Rev. Carol Solovitz	<i>Pastor</i>
	Home phone 863-450-4034
	<a href="mailto:pastor@gracelutheran-lakeland.org">pastor@gracelutheran-lakeland.org</a>
Linda Moser	<i>Organist/Choir Director</i>
	863-607-9105
	<a href="mailto:ldmoser@tampabay.rr.com">ldmoser@tampabay.rr.com</a>
Alicia King	<i>Bookkeeper</i>
	686-4466
	<a href="mailto:aking@advancedaccounting.info">aking@advancedaccounting.info</a>
	<a href="mailto:alicia@gracelakeland.com">alicia@gracelakeland.com</a>
Cathy Bozeman	<i>Child Dev. Center Director</i>
	<a href="mailto:cathy.bozeman@gracelakeland.com">cathy.bozeman@gracelakeland.com</a>
Sara Anderson	<i>Admin. Assistant</i>
	<a href="mailto:sara@gracelutheran-lakeland.org">sara@gracelutheran-lakeland.org</a>
Mary Flekke	<i>Bell Choir Director</i>
	<a href="mailto:mfleкке@tampabay.rr.com">mfleкке@tampabay.rr.com</a>
	648-5189
Marty Lewis	<i>Worship Band Director</i>
	<a href="mailto:mslewis@tampabay.rr.com">mslewis@tampabay.rr.com</a>
	648-4770
Church web site:	<a href="http://www.gracelakeland.com">www.gracelakeland.com</a>

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