

Grace Notes



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.

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Saturday, Dec. 1

- "Deck the Halls"

Tuesday, Dec. 4

- Morning Circle Luncheon

- ALOA Meeting

- Out to Lunch Bunch

meal at Fish City Grill

Monday, Dec. 10

- Saints Alive Luncheon

Wednesday, Dec. 12

- Afternoon Circle

Sunday, Dec. 16

- Grace Notes info. Due

- Annual reports due

Tuesday, Dec. 18

- Quilting

Monday, Dec. 24

- Christmas Eve Worship
church office closed

Tuesday, Dec. 25

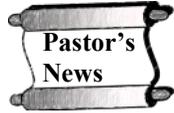
- Christmas Day
church office closed

Wednesday, Dec. 26

- Church office closed

Monday, Dec. 31

- Church office closed



Pastor's
News

Natalie Sleeth was one of my favorite composers of church music. She did lots of anthems for choirs among other compositions. Her melodies were sweet and full of emotion and her lyrics always seem to touch the tender part of the Gospel for me.

One of my favorites of her compositions was called, "Only a Baby Came". It is a wonderful Christmas anthem that expresses how God surprises us with the birth of a child for the whole world. It captures the Gospel of God's compassion and lovely presences in a world that is so often dark and painful.

"Only a Baby Came" is always a favorite theme of mine for Christmas because it is so unexpected. When we have problems in our lives, conflicts in our world, and chaos of evil floating over everything, it seems natural that we would want something strong to combat it. We long for a force to hit back at what has hurt us.

But God sees things so much differently. Yes, I am sure God sees all the evil and hurt, but God sent us God's self in the form of a child. What a surprise! How could a child possibly stand against all the anger the world has to offer?

And this child didn't have any advantages. In fact, if we are blunt, this child was forced to flee with his parents to avoid being killed. He was, like so many in our world, a refugee seeking a safe place of asylum where he could just grow up in peace.

Then as a man he did an amazing thing to save us all, he endured the death of a criminal on a cross. A terrible death. He was condemned, but innocent of all crimes that were thrown at him. He was innocent, yet he died for us.

Natalie Sleeth had it right, only a baby came; one who would become the cure of all the ills of the world; one that would take all of us to be with him in a better, perfect place.

It is really a miracle to me that God had a plan and that the plan was so perfect and so unexpected.

In the midst of the hurricane, one little candle.

In the midst of the giant, one little stone.

In the midst of the storm, one little voice; a voice of a child; a voice for all ages, a voice of peace.

Only a baby came to us at Christmas time, But, that was truly enough.

As we meditate on all that is holy during this very special season, let us have hope in the God who knows how to cure all the ills of the world.

From our family, Larry and me, to yours – a very holy and meaningful Christmas.

- Pastor Jeannine

**Women of the ELCA
Morning Circle Meeting**

December 4

Noon - Salad Luncheon
Bible Study - All members
Hostesses - June Clark &
Ruth Neidinger

Afternoon Circle

December 12

2:00 p.m.

Bible Study - All members
Hostess - Joan Rietze

The Bible Studies for the Morning and Afternoon Circles are held in the fellowship hall. All ladies are invited.

The Church Past and Present

Small Group Bible Study and Discussion about the history of the church and what we are facing in the future. This is designed for those that have joined our church recently and by invitation. If you are considering joining Grace, please contact the church office for an invitation to this class.

Saints Alive Luncheon

Monday, December 10

The Christmas catered luncheon will be held in the fellowship hall at noon on December 10. Cost for members is \$8.00, guest \$10.00. Payment is due to June Clark no later than December 6. You may pay by cash or check made payable to Saints Alive. The entertainment will be the "Tee Tones Quartet".

Weekly Adult Bible Study is on

Sundays at 9 a.m. in the fellowship hall. We are studying the book of Acts. It is an amazing history of the beginning of the church after the Resurrection. We are traveling with Paul as he spreads the Word of the saving grace of Jesus throughout the world. It is interesting to note how the church is the same 2,000 years later. We as the church, are still struggling with some of the same issues that the first century Christians were dealing with.

All are invited to come and explore the book of Acts.

Prayer Corner

Check out our new Prayer Corner on our website: Gracelakeland.com. It has a different prayer for each day of the month.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

- 4- Jane Lemley
Ruth Neidinger
- 5- Francesca Ittleman
- 9- Larry Mattson
- 10- Jim Hall
Robert Mattson
- 14- Stephanie Iverson
- 20- Carla McGee
- 22- Carol Sawyers
- 25- Immie Beck
Melanie Bizette
- 27- Phil Pape

Happy Anniversary

- 5- Bob & Barbara Hagen
- 19- Barbara & Mark Carpanini
Ken & Elaine Gallenbeck
- 29- Richard & Becky Whipple



“Deck the Halls”

Mark your calendar for Saturday, December 1 at 8:30 a.m. to join us in decorating the church for the Christmas season.

Many hands make light work.

Serving in the Church

Assisting Ministers:

- 12/2 Kristen Storms
- 12/9 Pat Blanchette
- 12/16 David W. Kinder
- 12/23 Barbara Carpanini
- 12/24 Stephanie Iverson
- 12/30 Barbara McPeak

Greeters:

Barbara Carpanini & Anne Guilford
June Clark & Ruth Neidinger (Dec. 24)

Ushers:

Carl & Judy Phillips

Altar Guild:

- 12/1 Stephanie Iverson & Janet Morris
- 12/9 Cheri & Kevin Zarnstorff
- 12/16 Angela Moran & Phyllis Whidden
- 12/23 Brenda H. & Larry Lawrence
- 12/24 All Members
- 12/30 Sue Stark & Barbara White

Sound Technicians:

Dan Stoller & Tim Dukes

The Out to Lunch

Bunch will meet at 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 4 at Fish City Grill. Everyone is invited.



Moving to Minnesota! Bur r r r..... (cold country). We honored Paul & Betty Tart, long-time members of Grace Lutheran at our coffee hour after worship on September 28. They have been very active at Grace for over 20 years, serving in numerous positions in the church. They will be greatly missed! We wish them the very best and hope we can count on them as “snowbirds”, coming to visit us in the winter months after they get settled up north. Below are a few pictures from the coffee hour.



Council Nominations and Elections 2019

Three positions on the congregational council are open for nomination and election. The Nominating Committee seeks your input for the identification of members who may be interested in serving in this important leadership ministry of Grace. Please contact Janet Morris (phone 863-619-5159, e-mail TravNeedle@aol.com) or Carla McGee (phone 863-644-7626, e-mail carla.mcgee76@yahoo.com) with eligible candidates. As nominees are identified, we will be sharing their bios prior to our January election.

The annual congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, January 13, 2019, in the fellowship hall after the 10 a.m. worship service. This will be a time to review the annual reports, elect new council members and to approve the financial budget for 2019. We ask all confirmed members to be present.

Annual reports from all the committees are due in the church office on or before December 16. We want to have the completed reports available for you to read one or two weeks prior to the annual meeting. Thank you for your cooperation.

The Social Ministry will be collecting unwrapped toys and gifts for the Lakeland Police Department's "Cops for Kids" Christmas. The deadline for the donation is December 6. Leave your unwrapped toys in the boxes in the fellowship hall.



Highlights of Council Meeting, August 21, 2018

The meeting began with all members present. There was a correction to the Minutes of June 19, 2018, regarding attendance.

Finance update - Lynda Mack presented the finance committee proposal for resolving accounts. The recommendation is to get rid of old activity and clear balances from designated fund accounts prior to 2012. The congregation will owe designated accounts \$10,000. This can probably be made up this year, if congregation continues to operate in the black. Some accounts would be zeroed out and the accounts will be eliminated. A motion was made and passed to accept the account adjustments as listed in the printout.

Treasurer's report - Mary Flekke reported that some bills didn't get paid in July, but will be caught up in August. We are operating in the black. A motion was made to approve the report for audit.

Pastor's report was accepted as printed with updates regarding recent member hospitalization and visitation.

New Business:

Property update - Pastor Jeannine presented a fact sheet she had prepared. St. David's Episcopal Church was purchased by a Baptist congregation. Florida Southern College expressed interest in purchasing the north 1/3 of our property. Last week we received a letter of intent from FSC. This week Pastor Jeannine, Carla McGee, Phyllis Whidden, and Wally Oestreich did a site visit with FSC representatives to see the Florida Southern student housing property at Ingraham and Lime Streets. This complex is built on a 1.2 acre site, which is the same acreage as our property they are interested in purchasing. Florida Southern College would like to construct a similar project on our property. Discussion concluded that any agreement with FSC should include the payoff of our mortgage, funds to carry out necessary property improvements, and money remaining to set up an endowment.

Community Garden - a decision was made by council for dissolution of the garden. Remaining grant monies will be returned to the agencies in proportion to what was originally given. Florida Bahamas Synod, Wheat Ridge/We Raise Foundation, and Social Ministry at Grace will receive disbursements.

Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Next meeting will be September 18 at 6:30 p.m.; followed by a joint meeting with the Call Committee.

- Kristen Storms, Recording Secretary

Highlights of Special Council Meeting, September 12, 2018

The meeting opened with prayer by Pastor Jeannine Sweet with all members presents with the exception of Marty Lewis, who was excused.

Mary made a motion that we let Two Guys Kitchen & Catering use our kitchen on September 21 from 2-7 p.m. They will be cooking here and taking the food to Florida Southern for approximately 50 to 60 students. A \$100.00 fee will be charged for the use of our building plus they are to provide their liability insurance. This was seconded and approved.

After discussion of the contract from Florida Southern the decision of the council was to move forward with the contract with three questions:

1. We want them to pay the closing costs,
2. This agreement is conditional on successful completion of intra-church approval processes under the congregational Constitution and the ELCA, and
3. We need a deeded cross parking easement for overflow parking.

We will have another informational meeting this Sunday, September 16 and then the congregational meeting will be on September 30 for the final vote for either to sell or not to sell.

- Phyllis Whidden

Highlights of Minutes of Council Meeting, September 18, 2018

The meeting began at 6:30 p.m., followed by a joint meeting at 7:00 p.m. with the Call Committee, with all members present with the exception of Mary Lewis & Kristen Storms, who were excused.

Pastor Sweet said that a memorial service for Diane Downey will be held on October 5, 2018, at 11 a.m. with a reception to follow. Preparations will be made by the quilting group.

Vitality survey results will be presented to the congregation on Sunday, October 7, 2018, following the worship service. Presentation will be by Sr. Michelle of the Synod office.

Proposal was made to have Jim Hall and Wally Oestreich oversee the breezeway reconstruction project; they will handle the responsibility of interaction with the construction firm and the crew. It is estimated the project would be able to get underway in mid-November. Full consensus of the group was identified to move forward.

- Carla McGee

How to Have the Best Christmas Ever

Close your eyes and picture the perfect Christmas. The smell of fresh-baked goods filling the house. The tree glistening with perfectly hung lights and a fire crackling as the kids play with new toys.

We start December with high expectations, but all too often our quest for the picture-perfect day leaves us frazzled and stressed. The Christmas season becomes flooded with anything but joy as we race to find the perfect gift and open our homes to family, in-laws, and friends.

This year can be different! Follow these two simple steps, and you can finally have the best Christmas ever.

1. Make the main thing the main thing.

The best way to avoid turning into the Grinch this Christmas is to remember the point of the holiday. Christmas isn't a task to complete or a burden to endure, it is a celebration of the burden that Jesus carried so that we could be free from sin and death!

We often hear "To us a child is born, to us a son is given," (Isaiah 9:6) and conclude that Christmas is a birthday party for the birth of Christ, but Christmas is a birthday celebration for us all because it marks the day Jesus was born so that we could be free!

Don't let the stress of making a list and checking it twice keep you from celebrating the salvation that came with Jesus! Make the main thing the main this season by remembering that Christmas is a celebration of God's ultimate gift of salvation.

2. Choose peace over chaos.

In a letter to the church in Colossae, the apostle Paul wrote about what it looked like to be alive in Jesus. He instructs the Colossians to, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful" (Colossians 3:15). This instruction is true for us today. We are called to live in peace, looking at our lives with thanks for what we have instead of complaining about what we don't have.

When we let peace rule in our lives, the stress of life slowly begins to fade away. The chaos of the holidays is put into context and suddenly becomes null compared with the grace of God and the joyful peace He brings to our lives when we seek Him.

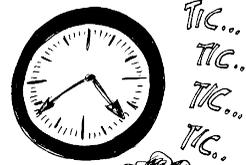
So put down the cookie cutters, step away from the gift wrap, and take time to rest in God's peace. Your house may not smell like fresh-baked goods and your tree may not sparkle, but seeking Jesus and His peace this holiday season will ensure you to have the best Christmas ever.

November Attendance

Date	Total
11/4	73
11/11	73
11/18	65
11/25	84

November Contributions

11/4	\$8,101.05
11/11	3,798.50
11/18	2,559.00
11/25	3,515.00



Counting the days & hours
till your Grace Notes
information is due on
December 16

Merry Christmas

*The church office will be
closed on December 24, 25,
26, & 31.*



*Merry Christmas
from the staff of Grace
Lutheran Church*

GRACE NOTES

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