



GRACIOUS WORDS NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2023 – JANUARY 2024

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH LAKE BENTON, MN



Worship Schedule

December: Sunday Worship – December 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 at Grace

Worship at 9:00 a.m. followed by Sunday school and Confirmation (Dec 3, 10 and 17) No Sunday School or Confirmation Dec 24 or 31.
Communion on 1st & 3rd Sundays. Fellowship following worship.



Sunday School Christmas Program – Sunday Dec 17 during worship.



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service – Sunday Dec 24 at 4 p.m.

Bible Study - each Wednesday – 3:00 p.m. at church (*no Bible Study Dec 27*)

GLCW meeting – Wednesday, December 6 – 1:30 p.m. at the church.

Will be making cookie plates, please bring 4 dozen of the same cookie.

Church Council – Sunday, December 17 – following worship

January: Sunday Worship – January 7, 14, 21, 28 at Grace

Worship at 9:00 a.m. followed by Sunday School and Confirmation.

Communion on 1st & 3rd Sundays. Fellowship following worship.

Bible Study - each Wednesday – 3:00 p.m. at the church

NO GLCW meeting in January

Church Council – Wednesday, January 17- 6:30 pm at church.



Grace 2023 Annual Meeting – Sunday January 28, 2024 - following worship.



Pastor Danner is in his office on Wednesdays from 9 am to 5 pm,

but please contact Pastor Dave anytime for an emergency or spiritual assistance 507-380-6926.



Online worship services available. If you cannot attend Sunday worship in person at Grace, the Pastor records a weekly worship service, which is available for online viewing via YouTube. Access via your smart phone, tablet, smart TV or computer under “Dave Danner Sermons” on the YouTube search bar. Grace also records our Sunday morning in-house worship and televises on Media Comm cable TV at 1 pm on the following Friday - reference Lake Benton Community Channel 117-2.

Grace Website - The Grace Lutheran Church website is available at <https://gracelutheranlakebentonmn.weebly.com>. The website can be your one-stop-shop for information and content about Grace Lutheran Church, including our newsletter, photos, programs and events.



Grace Facebook page - find us at [Grace Lutheran Church of Lake Benton](#). Please submit any content or suggestions to Tonia Czech, Susan Johnson or Susie Haupert to post items to this page.



Noisy Offering / Food Shelf Sunday – The 3rd Sunday of the month is designated for Noisy Offering and Food Shelf donations.

Noisy Offering – December will be directed to Lake Benton Food Shelf.

January will be directed to Shetek Lutheran Ministries.

Food Shelf - Donations can be monetary or items placed in the drop box at church.

All items are appreciated, but here are some suggested donations:

December - Baking products - flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt, pepper, brown sugar, powdered sugar, vanilla

January – Laundry Products – detergents, fabric softener sheets, stain remover



Worship Assistants

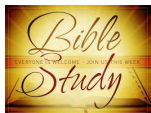
December: Deacon Tonia Czech **Altar Guild:** Susan Johnson / Karen Lichtsinn

Ushers: Michael Haugen / Gerry Rochel / Gary Hefele

January: Deacon Susan Johnson **Altar Guild:** Karen Lichtsinn / Anne Lichtsinn

Ushers: Dale Petersen / Michael Demuth / LaDon Prosch / Mike Czech

If you cannot fulfill your duties as a worship assistant, please contact Jolene Trageser, Grace Church secretary, to find a substitute. Thank you for helping with worship.



Join us for weekly Bible study on Wednesday afternoons at 3:00 p.m. in the fellowship hall at Grace. Everyone is welcome! (note – no Bible Study Dec 27)

IN OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

Gracious Father, we pray for all those who are facing illness, surgery, a troubled spirit, making health care decisions or are hurting in any way. Assure them of your presence at this time; look upon them with compassion, giving them peace and granting them the comfort and healing that only you can give. Pray for those who have no one else to pray for them. May they know of Your love through our actions toward them. Amen





The Pastor's Page

December 2023 / January 2024

As December dawns upon us, we begin the season of Advent, a season of preparation. Just as the time between All Saints Sunday and Christ the King Sunday was a time of preparation for the Second Coming of our Lord, so too is Advent a time of preparation for the coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Advent is a kind of double preparation in that while we prepare to commemorate the birth of Jesus, we also prepare for His second coming. This Second Coming will fully establish the Kingdom of God here on earth after Jesus passes judgement.

If we are preparing for two comings – the coming of a baby and the coming of the King, the question becomes how do we properly prepare? Do we just focus on the Christmas season, watching Hallmark Christmas movies or other favorite Christmas movies, getting all our shopping done, the presents wrapped, the cookies baked, and all the decorations put up? In other words, do we do what we can to get into the “Christmas spirit?” Or do we set aside all those ‘extra’ things, keeping Christmas simple and focus on preparing for the Second Coming? This would be done by taking the time for intentional devotions and Bible study, maybe even attending church services; volunteering to help the needy; donating clothes or food for the needy and many other ways to look to the needs of others at this time of year.

If we focus on the Christmas season and finding that Christmas spirit, then we do need to be cautious about where we look for it. For many years, even as early as the turn of the 20th Century and possibly earlier, there have been warnings about the commercialization of Christmas. So, where can we look to find the Christmas spirit? Some find the spirit in putting up Christmas decorations, adding more and more displays each year until they rival the Griswold's from *Christmas Vacation*. Others find it in giving more and ‘better’ gifts to family and friends. Some find it in baking all sorts of cookies and other holiday goodies and meals. Some find it watching the Christmas movies that are available.

One place which many people neglect to look for the Christmas spirit is in their own hearts. We want to find that feeling of Christmas outside of us, hoping that by being exposed to enough of it that we may get it. However, we forget the words from Jeremiah when God promises the New Covenant that is fulfilled by Jesus. Jeremiah writes in 31:33 that God says, “But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” This verse could also be translated that God will put His teachings on our hearts. This would be for all who believe in Jesus, not just the house of Israel. By searching our own hearts for the Christmas spirit, we can find it there, it may be only a small glimmer of a spark or it may be a flaming torch, but the spirit of Christmas can be found in ourselves. Our goal is to find a way to allow the Spirit to lead us into letting it be ignited so that others can see the good works of God through us. By finding the Spirit of Christmas that God has already placed in our hearts and allowing the Spirit to ignite it and make it grow, we can spread that good cheer to all whom we encounter, not only during this season of Advent and the Christmas season, but all throughout the year. It will be a light to the world which cannot be put out or bottled into a specific time of year.

May you have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and may you be led to new ways to let God's love light shine to others.

May God bless, Pastor Dave



Recipes For Sunday Brunch

French Toast Bake

from Susan Johnson

1 loaf French bread, cubed	2 tbsp. vanilla
8 eggs	½ C. flour
2 C. Milk	½ C. Brown sugar
½ C. Heavy Cream (if you use all milk, add an extra egg)	½ C. butter (cut in pieces)
¾ C. sugar	1 tsp. cinnamon
	¼ tsp. salt

Grease 9 X 13 pan, tear bread into bite sized pieces and place in bottom of pan. Mix eggs, milk, cream, sugar and vanilla. Pour over the bread. Cover tightly and put in refrigerator overnight. In a bowl, mix flour, brown sugar, cinnamon, butter and salt. Cut in the butter with a pastry blender until crumbly. Put in a zip lock bag overnight. The following day, sprinkle crumble mixture over the egg/bread mixture in the pan. Bake for 1 hour at 350 degrees. Can be served warm or cool, and you can pour on syrup when serving, but not necessary.

Creamy Wild Rice Egg Bake

from Julienne Prosch

1 package Creamy Wild Rice Soup Mix
3½ cups water
18 large eggs
1 cup half & half
3 tablespoons butter
½ cup shredded sharp Cheddar cheese
8 bacon slices, cooked & crumbled

Prepare Creamy Wild Rice Soup Mix according to package directions using water; set aside. In large bowl, whisk together eggs and half & half.

In large skillet melt butter over medium-low heat; pour in egg mixture. Stir, slowly and continuously with a rubber spatula until just set (eggs should still be moist), about 3-4 minutes.

Transfer eggs to a greased 13x9-inch baking dish. Top with soup, cheese and bacon. Refrigerate, covered, overnight. Preheat oven to 325°F. Bake, uncovered, 1 hour. Makes 8 servings.



The Grace Lutheran Church Women

The Grace Lutheran Church Women (GLCW) meet the first Wednesday of the month at 1:30 pm in the fellowship hall for a program and short meeting. Lunch is served following the meeting. All ladies are welcome. Next meeting December 6 at 1:30 p.m. and the group will be filling Cookie Plates as gifts to members and friends of Grace. All ladies are asked to bring 4 dozen cookies (all the same kind) to fill the plates. There will be no meeting in January.

GLCW Annual Fundraising Drive - Please consider donating to the annual fundraiser, if you have not done so already. Donations are running short of the \$2,000 goal for 2023. The proceeds are given to area organizations and charities. Please send your donation to Susan Johnson or Annette Hedge by Dec 15. We appreciate your support.



Simplify your Stewardship Giving - If you cannot attend worship each Sunday or just want to simplify your giving, Grace Lutheran Church accepts donations directly from checking and savings accounts. Six families currently use automated giving each month at Grace. Consider setting up an automatic EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer) payment through your bank for your regular gifts to Grace. You can setup donations through online banking or contact First Security Bank or your bank to arrange for automated donations. Save the envelope, the check and the stamp, and simplify your giving. Please contact Karen Lichtsinn for details 952-607-7002.

Events at Grace Lutheran Church



GLCW Meeting October 2023



GLCW Quilts October 2023



Brunch & Bingo Oct 2023



All Saints Sunday Nov 3, 2023



Ecumenical Thanksgiving Worship Nov 19, 2023

2023 Church Council Members

Deacons:	Barry Berkenpas - (Council President) Julienne Prosch Susan Johnson - (Council Secretary) Tonia Czech
Trustees:	Mike Weets - (Vice President) Mitch Long
Board of Education:	Susan Hauptert
Treasurer:	Karen Lichtsinn (cell phone 952-607-7002)



Thank you for being an important part of our church at Grace Lutheran. We appreciate that you took the time to read our newsletter. Please share your feedback with Barry Berkenpas, Jolene Trageser or any Council member. Let us know of additional items you wish to see or share in future editions.

Please notify the Pastor or Council President when:

- ✚ There is a birth or adoption of a child or grandchild
 - ✚ There is a death in your family
 - ✚ There is a hospitalization in your family
 - ✚ Someone becomes home bound
 - ✚ Someone becomes unemployed
 - ✚ You move or get a new phone number
 - ✚ A child moves out of the house or attends college
 - ✚ Whenever there is a cause for sorrow or a cause for joy
- ✓ **Pastor Dave Danner - cell (507) 380-6926 (anytime day or night)**
Email: dadanner@aol.com Office Hours – Wed. 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
 - ✓ **Barry Berkenpas - Church Council President - cell (507) 829-6308**
Email: barryberkenpas@gmail.com
 - ✓ **Jolene Trageser - Grace Church Secretary (507) 368-4243 Email: glc@itctel.com**
Leave messages at church or if urgent, call the Pastor directly.
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***Grace Lutheran Church – the Body of Christ wants to bring you
Christ's love in all the seasons of your life.***

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