

The Gracevine

NEWSLETTER OF GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH, NALC
Our Mission: "Sharing God's Love Through Grace"

January 2025



Happy New Year!

Grace Lutheran Church



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Worship: Sundays 8:00 and 10:30a.m.

Our Staff

Pastor:	Tom Jacobson
Office Manager:	Beth Gilgien
Accompanist:	Sue Ellen Simmons
Choir Director:	Diane Christensen
Handbell Choir:	Becky Winegardner
Men of Grace:	John Ulmer
Church Council President:	Carl Lahman
Council Vice President:	Bob Reynolds
Council Secretary	Susan Cheney
Director of Inreach:	Linda Keaser
Director of Outreach:	Daria Carr
Director of Upreach:	Casey Sigler
Financial Secretary:	Jim Roshon
Treasurer:	Rick Rockwell
Bd of Women President:	Cherl Haggenjos
Safety/Security Team:	Jim Lewis
Sacristan:	Meg O'Reilly
Facilities:	David Rodenbaugh

Please call the church office with regard to any of the following:

Hospitalizations; Baptisms; Confirmation; Weddings;

First Communion; Spiritual Counseling; Prayer Concerns

Called to Be Different

But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those you hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.

Luke 6:27-28 ESV
(Monthly Watchword for January 2025)



Back in 1983, Concordia Publishing House of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) produced a short film about the early career of Martin Luther in honor of the five-hundredth anniversary of his birth. This film is well-produced and historically accurate, and I share it with my confirmation students each year. It is called *Martin Luther: Heretic*, and it can be found on YouTube for anyone interested.

One scene showed an interaction between Martin Luther and his students. Luther had just experienced his theological “breakthrough,” where he understood that people are saved by God’s grace through faith rather than through their righteous works. He pointed out that people of faith do good works not to prove or gain anything, but just because that is how they are and who they are called to be. Christians live before God by faith, trust in God’s gift to them. One student objected: “It can’t be that easy.” But Luther responded: “You think faith is easy?”

If we read the words of Jesus and take them seriously, we realize that the life to which he calls us is not easy. We don’t earn our status before God, but when we live in relationship with God, we come to see God’s grace as a life-changing reality. We learn to question our assumptions, our actions, and

our desires. We learn to say, “*Thy* will be done” rather than “*My* will be done.” When we say those words in the Lord’s Prayer either corporately or privately, at least I don’t always take to heart the full meaning of what I am asking.

The monthly Watchword, or theme verse, for January is one such statement from Jesus that challenges our assumptions about life in the world. It goes against everything we feel and are taught. When someone wrongs others but especially wrongs us, we desire justice. We want the “bad guys” to get what they deserve. Finding the energy to pray for others in general is challenging. But here, Jesus wants us to use at least some of that energy to pray for those who harm us.

When it comes to earthly protection and justice, we can be grateful for the systems that God has put in place for the harmony and benefit of creation. In our sinful world, where there are people out to harm others, we need laws and institutions such as police and courts. People involved in such occupations serve an important role in the well-being of the world. The existence of these institutions helps maintain the distinction between right and wrong, and it helps (though doesn’t guarantee) accountability for wrongful actions.

But what kind of attitude does God desire to find in us in the process? *Love your enemies, do good to those you hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.* These are hard words to swallow. And yet this is the witness that Christians are called to give to the world. We are indeed called to be different in how we respond to others. Wrongdoers should face earthly justice for their actions, but in the process we do not forget that the wrongdoers are also human beings like us. Like us, they are in the image of God, and like us, they are the objects of God’s love. We pray that their eyes might be opened and that they, like us, might experience the love and grace of God, which has the power to change their lives.

How is it possible to love someone who has harmed us? Here it is important to distinguish between “love” and “like.” When someone has seriously harmed us, there is a good chance we will never “like” that individual or become close, personal friends with that person. Such is the consequence of sin in the world. But at the very least, we recognize that God’s love is for that person as much as it is for us. As much as we rely on God’s grace in our lives, we can be gracious enough to pray for their change of heart and that God’s blessing would be upon them as they move forward. By our graciousness, we bear witness to the God who has been so gracious to us, especially in the gift of Jesus Christ, our Savior, who is our life and our hope.

Thomas E. Jacobson

Pr. Tom Jacobson

The following persons, having been elected into positions of leadership in the church, will be commissioned January 19.

Our 2025 Church Council

President: Carl Layman
Vice President: Bob Reynolds
Council Secretary: Susan Cheney
Treasurer: Rick Rockwell
Inreach Leader: Linda Keaser
Outreach Leader: Daria Carr
Upreach Leader: Casey Sigler
Financial Secretary: Jim Roshon

Thank you to our out-going council members for a job well-done! *Matt Sheridan, Diane Christensen, Vicki Jones, Jackie Combs.*

Worship In January Sundays 8:00 and 10:30am Holy Communion Celebrated Every Sunday

Sunday, Jan. 5 - Epiphany of Our Lord

Isaiah 60:1-6 Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14
 Ephesians 3:1-12 Matthew 2:1-12

Sunday, Jan. 12 - Baptism of Our Lord

Isaiah 43:1-7 Psalm 29
 Acts 8:14-17 Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Sunday, Jan. 19 - 2 Epiphany

Isaiah 62:1-5 Psalm 36:5-10
 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 John 2:1-11

Sunday, Jan. 26 - 3 Epiphany

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10 Psalm 19
 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a Luke 4:14-21



November's Vital Signs

Average Worship Attendance - 135
 8:00am - 43 10:30am - 92

Grace Lutheran Church Council Minutes

December 10, 2024

Present: Pastor Tom Jacobson, Diane Christensen (Secretary), Rick Rockwell (Treasurer), Linda Keaser (Inreach Coordinator), Vicki Jones (Outreach Coordinator), Casey Sigler (Upreach Coordinator) Absent: Carl Lahman (President), Matt Sheridan (Vice President)

Guests: Susan Cheney - incoming Council Secretary, Bob Reynolds - incoming council Vice President

1. Call to Order: Diane Christensen

Opening Devotion/Prayer: Pastor Tom Jacobson

2. Pastor's Report - Pastor Tom Jacobson

- Worship:
 - Children's messages on most Sundays
 - Now using LBW Setting 1
 - With time after Epiphany, will switch to WOV Setting 5 (Bread of Life)
 - Thanksgiving service went well in St. John's Hall
 - Upcoming funeral December 13
 - Advent Wednesday services currently happening:
 - December 18 (remaining Advent midweek service this year)
 - Held in St. John's Hall, 7:00 PM
 - Evening prayer set to tunes of Christmas hymns
 - Ringing the bell during the Lord's Prayer on Sundays, as a way to invite the community to prayer wherever they are
 - Need to add to the list of tasks for greeters
- Was at NALC Commission on Theology and Doctrine meeting in Pittsburgh December 5-6 (with Pr. Orrey!)
 - Encouraging discussion regarding NALC plan to help meet pastoral needs of smaller congregations

- Pastoral acts:
 - Baptisms of Matthew Douglas and Hailey Douglas, November 24
 - Working with a few individuals on membership and baptism
- "My Fifty-Two Favorite Hymns" devotional articles have begun and are available on my blog, usually one per week: <https://theelectronicconventicle.weebly.com/>
 - 50 have been completed
- Continuing shut in and hospital visitation with Tom Rodgers
- Spiritual Book Discussion this fall
 - Dietrich Bonhoeffer's "Letters and Papers from Prison" to go along with movie about his life
- Confirmation class
 - Continuing to go well - Will complete unit on Ten Commandments before Christmas
- Summer youth trip
 - Have decided on Kenosha, Wisconsin July 20-25
 - Right now seven youth are committed; might be possible for more to attend if desired
- Video devotion
 - Have begun doing a brief video devotion every other week or so and posting it to YouTube and Facebook
- LifeWise Academy is expanding to offer a class for the Middle School sixth graders
 - To be held at the South Shore Ministries church, with bus transportation
 - Asking local churches for financial help to offer the sixth-grade program
- For final Sunday off in 2024, will be gone December 29
 - Will plan for a lay-led service that Sunday; Kelly O'Reilly has offered to help
- Some thoughts for formation of committees, perhaps begin after turn of year:
 - Membership committee, to go through membership list and "clean up" the list, determine who on the list is

deceased, who is active, inactive

- "Outreach" committee, to find ways to connect with those determined to be inactive
- "Mentorship" group, to pair new members with current members to provide ongoing connection with newcomers
- How to organize such committees, coordinate with inreach and outreach?
 - Bob Reynolds expressed an interest in helping with this
- Facilities: old dryer that was squeaking was replaced with new dryer, purchased with furnishing allowance funds

3. Inreach Ministry Report- Linda Keaser (Inreach Coordinator)

- Adventures in Faith (AIF)/Sunday School (SS)
 - AIF Christmas Program: Sunday, December 22 at 9:15 in the sanctuary.
 - Rehearsal: December 15th, 9:15 - 10:15 and after the 10:30 service (lunch provided) until approximately 1:15 pm.
- Women of the North American Lutheran Church
 - Quarterly board meeting will be held on Monday, January 13, 2025 at 10 am in the Franks' Fellowship Hall.
- Monday Bible Study
 - Next meeting: Monday, January 13, 2025 at 4 pm in the Frank's Fellowship Hall.
- Tuesday's Table
 - January 28, 2025 at 5 pm at the Clay Haus in Somerset.
 - Sign-up sheet in the Gathering Space.

Youth Groups (KFC and KFrogs) as reported by Casey Sigler

- On Saturday Nov 30th the youth held a lock-in with 24 kids in attendance. The youth made Christmas cards for the Shut-ins and Military Members and donated candy and snacks to the Military Members for their Christmas boxes.

The youth also made 15 Christmas Stockings for the kids of the Thornville Food Pantry. Extra Christmas cards were passed out to random persons during the 10:30 worship service the following morning. A Thanksgiving themed meal was served and many fun holiday games were played. Thanks to Grant McCallum for all his help!

- Also on Saturday Nov 30th , the Nativity Scene that the youth have been working all year to purchase was revealed and dedicated. Thanks to all those that contributed in any way to make this happen! We served cookies, coffee and hot cocoa afterwards. Please check it out if you haven't had a chance yet, it is beautiful!!!
- A new popcorn machine has been purchased and delivered for youth and church functions.
- Upcoming Events:
 - Superbowl Bake Sale
 - Youth Mission Trip

4. Outreach Ministry Report—Vicki Jones (Outreach Coordinator)

- Since colder weather has arrived, we need to be mindful of how we are stocking the Blessing Box. For the time being, we should be filling the Blessing Box with non-liquid donations. Donations can be placed in the bin in the Atrium entrance and will be used as needed to fill the Blessing Box.
- Dartball season is underway. Our team consists of 6-7 players each game.
- The Military Ministry sent out Christmas care packages to four military members last week.

5. Upreach Ministry Report- Casey Sigler (Upreach Coordinator)

- Thank you to all those that helped to decorate the church on Saturday Nov 30th for the Advent Season. The church looks beautiful!
- Advent Services:
 - Wednesday Evening Prayer in St John's Hall on 12/4, 12/11 and 12/18

- Christmas Eve Service at 5:00 and 9:00 PM
- Christmas Day Service at 10:30 AM- Christmas PJ's suggested!
- Saturday Jan 11th at 8:30 AM we will be taking down the Advent decorations. Many volunteers needed.

6. Treasurer's Report - Rick Rockwell, Treasurer

- Reports submitted.

7. Facilities Report - Dave Rodebaugh, Facilities Coordinator

- Checked furnace blower capacitors and all were within specifications. Only filters needing replacement were in the gathering space ceiling.
- Verified that the parsonage yellow jackets were gone and caulked the siding (brick junction).
- Removed an old door camera that was outside of the gathering space exterior door.
- Worked on fixing dryer noise at parsonage. It was stated that the dryer squeak was gone with the replacement of the rollers, but the motor is still loud.
- Carpet cleaning of Fellowship Hall is scheduled for Thursday, January 2nd at 10am.
- Looking into the possibility of getting a programmable electronic sign instead of the outside manual sign.

8. Old Business

- Library Blessing Box - in progress
 - Bob Reynolds gave update
 - Discussed labeling options and shelf placement.
- Elementary School building use for emergencies - Pastor has been in contact with Principal Jay Hickman. Dialog ongoing.

9. New Business

- All Ohio Mission Region NALC Church Councils Retreat on Saturday, January 11th at Grace Lutheran, Springfield.

- Council will attend. Pastor will send registration link to council members.
- Electronic Programmable Sign
 - A member of Grace would like to fund a new programmable electronic sign to replace our current manual sign. The new sign would be able to display messages, events, and images with wireless remote access. As a result, lots more possibilities for a variety of messages that can be changed more quickly.
 - A feasibility study has begun.
- DMO Security Procedure
 - Discussion of possibilities for further building security. No actions taken at this time.

10. Special Thanks to outgoing council members:

- Matt Sheridan, Diane Christensen, Vicki Jones, Jackie Combs

11. Adjournment

12. Closing Prayer - The Lord's Prayer

Next Council Meeting: January 11 (Sat) at Grace Lutheran, Springfield.

Installation of council: January 19

Respectfully submitted, Diane Christensen (Council Secretary)

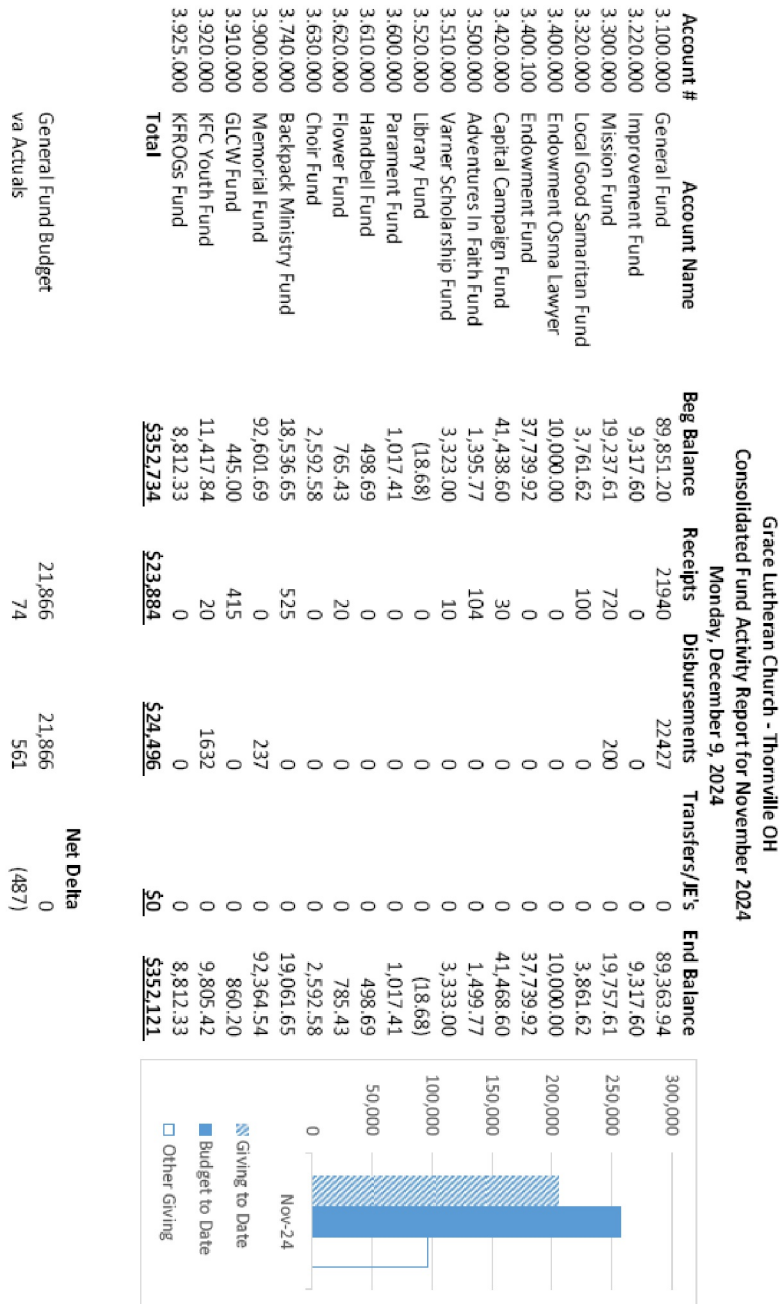


Transferred to the Church Triumphant:

*Vivian Arlene Crist
March 28, 1936 - December 7, 2024*

HAPPY NEW YEAR! Have you thought about your New Year's resolution? You can make a resolution that will last throughout the year and years to come by resolving to be active in the life of the congregation! Pray about this and consider....

- ♦ **Volunteering** to help in the worship services. Visit the Congregation Corner in the gathering space. It is the primary location for information about our church. Also the place to sign-up to volunteer. (Volunteers needed!)
- ♦ **Greeters:** Welcoming people coming for worship, handing out bulletins, collecting the offering, and more.
- ♦ **Lector:** Reading of the lessons.
- ♦ **Acolytes:** Lighting the candles.
- ♦ **LifeWise Safety:** This takes approximately 2 ½ to 3 hours on Wednesdays and Thursdays assisting kids crossing Columbus Street from Thornville Elementary School to Grace and back.
- ♦ Attending an **Adventures in Faith** class on Sundays at 9:15am. We offer classes for all ages!
 - ♦ Two **Adult Classes** - Kris Lamphere in St John's Hall, Room 203 (main level), Karen and Jim Lewis in The Franks Fellowship Hall (lower level)
 - ♦ **6th - 12th grades** - Pastor Theresa Jacobson, AIF/SS Coordinator, and Amber Feyh (top floor)
 - ♦ **1st -5th grades** - Jessica Rockey (top floor)
 - ♦ **PreK-K** - Linda Keaser in Noah's Club (lower level)
 - ♦ **Confirmation Class** - Pastor Tom Jacobson Classroom 1, Room 206 (off Gathering space, main level)
- ♦ **Become Active** in one of the Women's Bible Study Circles, in the Men's Monthly Breakfast Group, or Tuesday's Table. Choose any of these, or you can start your own group!
 - ♦ **Friendship Circle** - This circle meets the second Tuesday of each month at noon in the Fellowship Hall.



- ♦ **Monticello Circle** - This circle meets the fourth Wednesday of each month at 6 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.
- ♦ **Men's Breakfast Group** meets on the third Saturday, 8:00am, at Nana & Papa's Restaurant in Thornport. This is a men's monthly breakfast meeting for fellowship, prayer, and lite Bible study.
- ♦ **Tuesday's Table** is a dining out group. If you love to eat out, then this group is for you! They meet on the fourth Tuesday, 5:00pm, at the restaurant chosen for that month. New dining experiences each month!

Children's Christmas Program, "*A Prophet Foretold the Messiah*" was held on Dec. 22. Thanks to Pastor Theresa, Linda Keaser, Jessica Rockey, and Amber Feyh for coordinating this event.



♪ My Fifty-Two Favorite Hymns ♪

Pr. Tom is providing a weekly devotional reflection on his list of fifty-two of his favorite hymns, one for each week of the year, which is posted on his blog. You can access them at the following link: <https://theelectronicconvicticle.weebly.com>
 **Next month the entire list will be printed!

- 20 Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord
- 21 Sunshine and Rain
- 22 Forth in Thy Name, O Lord, I Go
- 23 This Is My Father's World
- 24 The Numberless Gifts of God's Mercies
- 25 Evening and Morning
- 26 Now All the Woods are Sleeping
- 27 Rise Up, All Things That God Has Made
- 28 Baptized into Your Name Most Holy
- 29 Go Forth, My Heart, This Summer Day
- 30 Day by Day
- 31 Is It True?
- 32 Jesus, Lover of My Soul
- 33 Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing
- 34 The Lord Protects and Holds Me
- 35 As the Sunflower Turns in the Morning
- 36 Draw Near and Take the Body of the Lord
- 37 Thy Holy Wings
- 38 He Leadeth Me: Oh, Blessed Thought!
- 39 I'm a Pilgrim, and I'm a Stranger
- 40 The Church's One Foundation
- 41 Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise
- 42 Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice
- 43 Rise, O Children of Salvation
- 44 God Moves in a Mysterious Way
- 45 How Fair the Church of Christ Shall Stand
- 46 Great Is Thy Faithfulness
- 47 What Wondrous Love Is This

- 48 Sorrow and Gladness
- 49 Like Noah’s Weary Dove
- 50 My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less
- 51 Children of the Heavenly Father

Our New Assisting Minister!

We welcome Grant McCallum as an assisting minister, who began serving on December 8, 2024.



Our Assisting Choir Director: ☺



Piper Hupp
16

PUZZLE

FISHING DIRECTIONS

When fishermen obeyed Jesus and let down their nets, they caught so many fish that their boats began to sink! Simon Peter fell at Jesus’ knees. What happened next?

Directions: Use the coordinate clues to locate the correct words and complete Luke 5:10-11 (NIV) below. The first number in each clue pair goes across, and the second number goes up.

Then _Jesus_ said to _____, “Don’t be _____; from _____ on you will _____ for _____.” So they _____ their _____ up on _____, left _____ and _____ him.

Luke 5:10-11, NIV

Answers: Jesus, Simon, afraid, now, fish, people, pulled, boats, shore, everything, followed

*Grace Lutheran Church
Thornville, Ohio*

Purpose

To invite All to discover, live and share God's gift of new life through Jesus Christ.

Mission Statement

Sharing God's Love through Grace.

Vision

We Are A Community Developing Faithful Followers Of Jesus By Experiencing God's Grace Through Friendship, Spiritual Growth and Service.

Core Values

1. That the Gospel calls us to unconditional regard for all people.
2. That Prayer is necessary for our relationship with God, one another, and the world.
3. That Scripture provides the foundation for our lives of faith.
4. That the authority for our ministry is founded in Jesus Christ, the head of the Church, which is the Body of Christ on earth. An elected Parish Council provides administrative authority; our called pastor(s) provides the spiritual authority of the Office of Word and Sacrament Ministry.
5. That each member is uniquely gifted by God for ministry and is expected to mature in discipleship of Jesus Christ.
6. That any ministry based on our Purpose, Mission, Vision and Core Values is valid for our congregation, and may, at any time,

"Phishing" Scams - In our sinful world, there is unfortunately no shortage of people who seek to deceive and take advantage of others. Often, such scammers will send emails or texts to church members pretending to be the pastor and then asking for money or gift cards. If you receive one of these emails or other communications, ignore them. Pastor Tom or other NALC church leaders will never contact you in such a manner. If you do receive such an email or text, please inform the church office.

**Grace Lutheran Church
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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