

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH



Grace
Lutheran Church

**JANUARY 2025
GRACE VINE
NEWSLETTER**

Epiphany

Matthew 2:1-12



Letter from Pastor Kris

The bells of Christmas chime once more. The Heav'nly Guest is at the door.
He comes to humble dwellings still with new year gifts of peace, good will.
Lutheran Book of Worship #62

Okay, okay, the Heav'nly guest is no longer "at the door," he has indeed already entered; Advent is (in a manner of speaking) "behind us" and the Babe of Bethlehem is born. But I like the way in which this hymn writer has connected the Advent of Christ with the New Year and so between that and the fact that there are twelve days of Christmas (Epiphany being January 6) means it's still Christmas time as most of you are reading this, I trust you'll indulge me in the use of a Christmas hymn even though December 25 is in the rear-view mirror.

This old Danish hymn has a special place in my heart. I remember not only singing this hymn in church each year at Christmas, but also I remember being at my paternal grandmother's house, candles lit on the tree (yes, I said candles... real candles, not the battery operated type, clipped on the tree and lit), dancing around the tree with my dad, grandma, and aunt singing this hymn in Danish, "Det kimmer nu til Julefest..."

(Scene Change) Part of the bedtime routine in our house includes Jenn saying the bedtime prayer, "Now I lay me down to sleep...", singing the Lord's Prayer to a kid-friendly tune, followed by, "You Are my Sunshine"... this is an unchanging liturgy. On my part, I select two to three verses of a hymn which changes with the changing seasons of the church year (by the way: they get very excited when they hear their hymn sung in church).

This Advent/Christmas season "The Bells of Christmas" is Alyssa's bedtime hymn. This has afforded me an opportunity to reflect on this hymn and, in doing so, I had an epiphany (not to prematurely throw ourselves forward into the next season of the church year). I've always associated the "New Year gifts" of this hymn with the flip of the calendar (ex. 2024 moving into 2025) which may well be what the hymn writer intended by this line. My epiphany was this: when the angels brought their tidings of peace and goodwill to the shepherds that first Christmas night, their tidings weren't about the "New Year" per se* but the new age/eon/time ushered in with the birth of Christ and hence the beginning of the age/eon/time of the gospel and the "end of (the age/eon/ time of) the Law for all who believe" (Rom.10:4). Even as we flip the calendar from December to January - the old year to the new year - the birth of Christ means the end of the age of the Law's condemnation and the beginning of the Gospel's age of peace with God through Jesus Christ. This is the new year/new age/new eon greeting proclaimed by the holy angels in Luke 2 and gifts which come with the Babe of Bethlehem.

As we once again close out and say goodbye to an old year, may we step into the new year with the all the grace and peace of our Lord, Jesus Christ. May 2025 be for you a year of grace and peace: *Anno Domini* (the year of the Lord [and his gospel reign]). And not just in 2025, but may you always be knowing God *for you* and not against you. Then the peace and good will proclaimed by the angels which the Christ Child actually gifts you and Christmas bells themselves harken us back to, will be yours.

Happy & Blessed New Year!

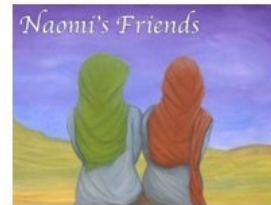
Pastor Kris

* Before I get comments and emails on this, I do realize that pre-Gregorian calendar the "New Year" would not have been in January hence I put "new year" in quotes. I am also aware that the date of Christmas was established around the early to mid-200s based on writings of Tertullian (d. around 220) and St. Hippolytus (d.235)

Announcements



(Older Wiser Lutherans)
Meets for games, fun, and entertainment in the Fellowship Hall the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 1:30 pm. All are welcome to attend.



Naomi's Friends meet the 2nd & 4th Tuesday of each month at Ale's Crab House @ 12 pm.



The Care Center is in need of these items:

- Men's and Women's winter clothing
- Canned Chili
- Canned Peaches
- Side items for Holiday Baskets



Church Council meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm in room 8. If a regularly scheduled council meeting needs to be rescheduled, the will be notified through the weekly MailChimp mass emailer as well as the bulletin.

On January 12, 2025
after second service your
Mission and Service Ministry Team
is hosting a brunch!

Please join us in the fellowship hall where each table will provide an opportunity for you to learn more about one of Grace's partners in mission!

TWELFTH NIGHT CELEBRATION

January 5th, 7pm in the Sanctuary

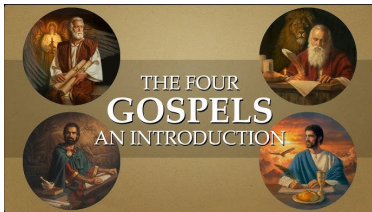
A night of Lessons and Carols to conclude the Christmas season, led by the pastors and the Lindula family.

There will be a bonfire, a cookie buffet, hot cocoa and cider to follow.



Jan 19th at 11:30 am in the sanctuary.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



Peace Bible Study meets the third Wednesday of the month at 9 am in the CR. The study is called *Introduction to the Four Gospels*. All are welcome.



Limbo Young Adult Life group meets Mondays at 6:30 p.m. at the Smee's home.

Team 784
**Intro to the Bible &
The Bible's Big Story
with Pastor Carleton
Fellowship Hall**

Augustana
**The Lutheran Perspective
With Pastor Kris
Conference Room**



Join "A Bible and a Pencil" Bible study via Zoom on Tuesdays at 1:00 pm. The study is on the book of Exodus. Please contact Mark Brynestad via email at marknsue78@gmail.com for further information regarding this class.



An in-depth Bible study of Mark via Zoom on Tuesday nights, 7:00, under the instruction of Mark Brynestad. Please contact Mark Brynestad via email at marknsue78@gmail.com for further information regarding this class.

Scripture Readings for January

Date	Gospel Reading	Additional Readings
Jan 5th	Luke 2:40-52	First Reading 1 Kings 3:4-15 Psalm Reading 119:97-104 Second Reading Ephesians 1:3-14
Jan 12th	Luke 3:15-22	First Reading Isaiah 43:1-7 Psalm Reading 29 Second Reading Romans 6:1-11
Jan 19th	John 2:1-11	First Reading Isaiah 62:1-5 Psalm Reading 128 Second Reading 1 Corinthians 12:1-11
Jan 26th	Luke 4:16-30	First Reading Nehemiah 8:1-10 Psalm Reading 19:1-14 Second Reading 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a



Sunday
Morning

Scripture
Readings

January 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Office Closed	2 5:10 pm Praise Band	3 12 pm Missions and Service Team Meeting	4
5 Worship 8:00 & 10:30am 7pm 12th Night Celebration	6 6:30pm Limbo	7	8	9 2:30pm Parkinson's Group 5:10 pm Praise Band 7pm Choir Rehearsal	10	11
12 Worship 8:00 & 10:30am 11:30am Mission Festival Brunch 6pm Youth Group	13 6:30pm Limbo	14 12pm Naomi's Friends 1:30pm OWLS	15 9am Peace Study	16 5:10 pm Praise Band 7pm Choir Rehearsal	17	18
19 Worship 8:00 & 10:30am 11:30am Annual Meeting 6pm Youth Group	20 Office Closed 6:30pm Limbo	21	22	23 5:10 pm Praise Band 7pm Choir Rehearsal	24	25
26 Worship 8:00 & 10:30am 6pm Youth Group	27 6:30pm Limbo	28 1:30pm OWLS	29	30 5:10 pm Praise Band 7pm Choir Rehearsal	31	



502 N. Norma
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

For God so loved the world that
he gave his only Son, so that eve-
ryone who believes in him may
not perish but may have eternal
life.

John 3:16 (NRSV)



www.gracelutheran.org
www.facebook.com/gracelutheran.org

We're on the Web at:

Rev. Kris Madsen, *Senior Pastor*
Rev. Carleton Smece, *Family, Youth, and Education*
Michelle Koenig, *Office Manager*
Jane Kuhlman, *Music*
Paul Jauregui, *Custodian*



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Worship Services Sundays at 8 & 10:30 am
Christian Education Hour Sundays 9:15 am

