



December 2023 Grace Notes

Volume 11 Issue 12

The Angels of Christmas

Christmas songs begin to play in early November but mostly familiar “holiday music” full of sentimental longings about family and home. There is a festive atmosphere in popular destinations, town squares, and shopping areas offering visual offerings of the season. We begin with Advent and work our way up to the glorious day of Christmas. It seemed to me that time is compressed and we wait with anticipation. God communicates hope through the angels. Author Susan Robb in her book, *The Angels of Christmas*, asked what images first come to mind when you think of Christmas? Christmas tree, hanging of ornaments, Christmas caroling and Christmas program in Church come to mind. In my home church, I recall the excitement of being called upon to be one of the wise men and following the service, gift giving to all Sunday School students. Brown bags were passed around containing an apple, a pencil and a small notebook. I’m not sure whether the “angels” received something extra like orange fruits. Apples and oranges were considered a treat when I was growing up.

I always think of angels as feminine representations of the holy messengers. Angels were often depicted as delivering their messages of grace, power, hope, awe and mystery. The list can go but angels can also deliver not so “good news.”

Think of cherubs. The Renaissance painter Raphael painted a pair of chubby cherubs, ironically found at the bottom of a painting, *Madonna and Child*, whimsically looking up. But in the Old Testament, a Cherub is an angel of the Lord with a flaming sword who stood guard, preventing Adam and Eve from returning after their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. In the Gospel of Luke, the angel Gabriel made a sudden appearance to a city in Galilee named Nazareth, to visit Mary and said, *“Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you. Do not be afraid, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call him Jesus.”*

This prompted Mary to ask, *“How can this be?”* The angel replied, *“Nothing is impossible with God.”* Joseph also experienced the angel of the Lord and responded uniquely because the *Word of God has come!*

Wherever you are in this season of faith, may you be surrounded with the assurance that our God pursues our hearts. God is with us. The angels sing, *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased.”*

Come and join us in worship every Sunday and experience the joy of God’s redeeming love. We are blessed with the opportunity to worship here at Grace and we look forward to seeing you in a familiar place.

Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year,

Pastor Romir Esguerra, Adrienne Hartman, Peggy Weems, Pastor Nancy Hunter,
Sharon Fisher, Kevin McOlgan, Ted Poplawski and Matt Runnels.

ANGEL TREE

- * Donors are encouraged to select an angel from the tree, purchase a suitable gift(s) and return the unwrapped gift(s) to the tree with the angel tag attached.
- * Place the gift in a heavy paper bag and attach the Angel to the bag. And place under the tree. Please sign your name on the sheet beside the Angel Tag that you select .
- * Gift cards may be received in lieu of gifts. Gifts in price should be about \$35 per child. Higher amounts are up to the discretion of the donor. All items must be new.
- * Wrapping paper can be included for the parents to wrap the gifts.
- * All gifts are due back to Grace Church by Sunday, December 10th.

They ask that you do not use gift bags. Gift bags break easily when transporting.

Our very own angel—Clarise Boswell with the help of Linda and Steve Meister put the Angel Tree up. Tags are ready for pickup. Help make Christmas bright for a family in our community!



As we enter the season of Advent, leading up to our celebration of the birth of our Savior, the choir, bells, organist, pianist, soloist, and our charming children, are preparing a Christmas Cantata for the third Sunday in Advent. It also includes a few Christmas Hymns that you know and love, so you can sing right along with us.

Join us at the 10:30 service on December 17th for
"Angels of Christmas".

Christmas Cantata

October

2023 Income & Expense Summary

Comparison to expected cash flow for budget approved 12/20/22

	October		Year to Date	
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual
INCOME	\$19,808	\$21,723	\$223,083	\$220,740
EXPENSES				
Apportionment	\$2,317	\$0	\$23,170	\$13,902
Salaries & Benefits	\$14,887	\$14,356	\$158,617	\$151,121
Administration	\$1,221	\$968	\$12,209	\$10,677
Programming	\$933	\$511	\$9,333	\$5,542
Church Buildings	<u>\$10,809</u>	<u>\$12,707</u>	<u>\$80,634</u>	<u>\$75,444</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$30,167	\$28,542	\$283,963	\$256,686
SURPLUS OR (DEFICIT):	-\$10,359	-\$6,819	-\$60,880	-\$35,946

Notes:

- 1) Income continues to track the budget reasonably well.
- 2) Expenses \$27k below budget; \$18k below when adjusted for apportionment not paid.
- 3) Because the approved 2023 budget is not balanced, there are still challenges.

OFFERING ENVELOPES FOR 2024

Since our current offering envelopes have no expiration dates on them you can continue to use them in the New Year and beyond until you run out of them (your account # will remain the same). Be sure to contact the church office if additional envelopes are needed.



Thanks for your continued financial support of Grace Church.

God's Work Our Hands

GRATITUDE CORNER

Thanks to all who give extra effort to make our advent season special.



DEVOTIONS FOR THE SEASON

The whole created world waits and hopes for the coming of Christ.

ANGELS OF CHRISTMAS

Bible Study with Pastor Romir will meet on Wednesdays, December 6th, 13th and 20th at 6pm in the library. There is no book required for this Bible study. Please join us.

SWEATSHIRTS FOR THE HOMELESS

Missions will do our annual sweatshirt drive for the homeless. We need Men's L, XL & larger size. Bigger is better shirts can be layered underneath for warmth. Dark colors preferred. Sweatshirts can be placed in Narthex under Christmas tree starting after Thanksgiving. We will collect them until December 26. If questions, call Adrian Stoddard 815-353-6032. Thank you for your generosity!

MISSION OF THE MONTH

Will Grundy Medical Clinic

Funds collected will be sent to the Will Grundy Medical Clinic to support their mission of providing medical care for those in the community who cannot afford it.

CANDY DONATIONS NEEDED

During the coming weeks our Confirmation class will be collecting candy donations to make holiday gifts for senior citizens and shut-ins being served by the Meals on Wheels program. More people are in need of assistance this year than ever before. These gifts with their meals are a real treat for them and a simple way for us to show them that Grace UMC cares.

About 300 pounds of individually wrapped regular and sugar-free candies are needed for this project. Your left-over Halloween candy is an ideal donation. Monetary donations are most welcome, too; let us buy for you!

Candy donations can be dropped off outside the church office in our decorative collection box; monetary donations can be mailed to the church or left in the mailbox. Bring in by December 10th.



SUNDAY'S IN DECEMBER

December 3rd 1st Sunday of Advent

Hanging of the Greens

December 10th 2nd Sunday of Advent

Communion

December 17th 3rd Sunday of Advent

'Angels of Christmas' Cantata

December 24th 4th Sunday of Advent

10:30 Sunday Worship

7:00pm Christmas Eve Service

December 31st New Years Eve

SUNDAY'S IN JANUARY 2024

January 7th

Communion Sunday

January 14th

Praise Sunday

January 21st

Worship

January 28th

Worship

CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR GRACE CHILDCARE

Since Grace Child Care is one of our outreach ministries of the church, let's help them this Christmas by bringing the following items:

- ◆ Paper plates
- ◆ Paper napkins
- ◆ Disposable kids face masks

- ◆ Paper towels
- ◆ Clorox wipes
- ◆ Baby wipes
- ◆ Kleenexes

Please put the donations in the decorated box by the church kitchen.

Thanks so much for your help!



ALL ARE INVITED UWF CHRISTMAS TEA

December 9 at 1PM

presenting

A CHRISTMAS POEM

RSVP to Barb 815-325-1624

Hoping you can come & bring a friend.



- 12/3—Brianna Anderson
- 12/4—Debra Black, Quinn Kolodziej
- 12/8—Maria Pons
- 12/9—Patti Bailey, Nancy Hunter, Jay Wait
- 12/11—Frieda Gray, Juda Gray
- 12/12—Alice Jackson, Linda Jursinic
- 12/13—Kathryn Ray
- 12/14—Peg Tucker
- 12/15—Joan Krosnicki, Caryn Young
- 12/16—Zachary Harrison
- 12/17—Elijah Gray
- 12/20—Destiny Hicks
- 12/21—Gene Lockhart
- 12/22—Matthew Renzi
- 12/23—Reyna Guzman
- 12/24—Jay Caswell
- 12/26—Russ Ghilain
- 12/27—Benjamin Meister
- 12/28—Jacob Linko
- 12/3- - Mia Bowan
- 12/31—Stephanie Butler, Jean Navin
- 12/31—Rachel Stoddard

- Jeffrey & Michelle Ray December 17, 1994
- Gail & Lee Shaw December 23, 1961
- Henry & Clarice Boswell December 31, 1957



NOVEMBER ATTENDANCE	WORSHIP	CHILDREN'S	ADULT
	8:30AM 10:30AM	SUNDAY SCHOOL	SUNDAY SCHOOL
Nov. 5	5/73	12	11
Nov. 12	6/68	20	8
Nov. 19	9/75	25	13
Nov. 26	5/71	24	14





Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
31 8:30am Prayer and Devotion 10:30 Worship					1 	2
3 8:30am Prayer and Devotion 9am Christian Ed 10:30 Worship Hanging of the Greens	4	5	6 6pm Bible Study 6:15 Bells 7:30 Choir	7 7:30 am Men's Breakfast 6pm Daycare Christmas Program	8	9 UWF 1PM Christmas Tea
10 8:30am Prayer and Devotion 9am Christian Ed 10:30 Worship/Communion Angel Tree Return 6pm SPRC 7pm Charge Conference	11	12	13 11:30am Pantry 6pm Bible Study 6:15 Bells 7:30 Choir	14 7:30 am Men's Breakfast 	15	16
17 8:30am Prayer and Devotion 9am Christian Ed 10:30 Worship Cantata	18 5pm Daybreak 	19 7am Daybreak Breakfast	20 Grace Notes Deadline 6pm Bible Study 6:15 Bells 7:30 Choir	21 7:30 am Men's Breakfast	22	23 
24 8:30am Prayer and Devotion 10:30 Worship 7pm  <i>Christmas Eve Worship</i>	25 	26	27 6:15 Bells 7:30 Choir	28 7:30 am Men's Breakfast	29	30 

Grace United Methodist Church

1718 Avalon Avenue

Joliet, Illinois 60435-5799

Christmas Eve Service



7 pm - Christmas Service

