



GRACE

For the Moment

The Newsletter of Grace Lutheran Church

December 2024



December **Worship:**

Sundays:

9:00 am

Wednesdays:

6:30 pm

Christmas Eve:

6:30 pm

Sunday School & **Adult Education**

10:00 am

(No SS Dec 28)

Sunday School *Christmas* *Program*



All are invited to the Sunday School Christmas program on December 14 at 9 am. Our Sunday School children will tell the Christmas story and sing Christmas carols. Senior FROGS will serve cookies and coffee following the program.

Looking Ahead...

The 2025 Annual meeting will be held on Sunday, January 18, 2026.

Food will be provided by the senior FROGS after worship before the meeting begins.

More details to follow.

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Advent Theme: “This same Jesus...will come again”

Week One: Are You Ready?

Text: Matthew 24:36-44

In a world full of uncertainty, is it truly possible to be prepared? For many, being ready means planning for peaceful moments. That includes budgeting carefully, securing their homes, and ensuring sufficient security. However, history shows us that doing all these things doesn't guarantee safety; it might help, but it doesn't make us completely safe. Mara, a high school teacher, used to think that planning for disasters was the best way to be prepared. But she soon realized that all her precautions couldn't stop Mother Nature from destroying her home. Even though she had nowhere to call her own, her neighbors came to her rescue and offered her a place to stay.

Years later, when Mara grew old, she asked to be buried beneath the chapel bell of the school. “Let my bones remind you,” she said, “that readiness is not about knowing what comes next. It’s about showing up with love.”

“Therefore, you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour” (Matthew 24:44). These words mark the start of our Advent season. Let us prepare for Christ’s return by demonstrating love.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, unless you prepare us, we can never be ready. Prepare us to come with love. Amen.

December Message

From Church Council President



Matthew 2:2 reads, "Where is the newborn King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in far-off eastern lands and have come to worship him."

Recently I had the opportunity to view the Northern lights from our back deck. This wasn't the first time I had witnessed this amazing display of light, but they continue to amaze me and I long to see them again. To watch the different colors, how they dance around in the night sky and how they reach to the heaven above makes me think of what that bright star must have looked like in the Eastern sky on that holy night that our Savior was born.

Many times I am in awe of the beauty that the sun can provide in either a sunrise or sunset. All of these displays of light are awesome, but the Light of the world that God gave us so many years ago makes all of these great lights look like a flashlight that the batteries are just about dead.

As we begin the Advent season we will observe the light from the candles that are lit each Sunday morning. Then on Christmas Eve we will end our service again with the dark sanctuary filled with the candles that we will each hold. Hopefully these will all remind you of the main reason for the season.

I have probably shared with many of you how I used to have a negative view on Christmas as it neared while I was working at FedEx. One day shortly before Christmas I had a delivery in a town in Iowa and that particular package was some type of medication which required a signature from an adult at that residence. Upon ringing the doorbell, a young child answered the door and I asked if their mom or dad was home and that I needed them to sign for the package.

This child then said their mom was home but asked if I could come in as she wasn't able to come to the door. As I entered the not so elegant home, I noticed there was no tree or decorations. Upon reaching the living room I found a young woman who was not in the best of health and there in the room with her was a young child in a wheel chair. After getting the needed signature I slowly made my way out to my truck again.

I was tired of delivering packages that I knew were Christmas gifts and goodies, but this package made me realize that I had so much to be thankful for. I still wonder to this day what became of that family and what their whole story was. All I know is that it changed my attitude about Christmas. I don't know if the light of Christ was shining in that household that year but it definitely made me think of how I needed to make the light of Christ shine through my life.

Once again, I have probably made this statement before, but on December 25th we will observe the birth of our savior. However, we should celebrate Christmas each day of the year.

As you observe all of the decorative lights of the season, remember to let your light shine as you never know when your life may be the only Bible that some people read. Have a very Merry Christmas!

Your President, Joel

YOUTH NEWS



Thank you to Jonas Sattler, Landon Wieman, Alecus Wall, Caleb Wieman, Kaden Fosheim and Logan Gillespie for helping with the presentation of the flags during the Veterans Tribute during services on November 9th.

SENIOR FROGS have been learning about identity. We have explored how society shapes our identity and how we can find our true identity in Jesus. We played a fun game after the lesson.

Please mark 12/14 serve cookies following the Sunday School Christmas program.
12/17 @7 Backpack program and Christmas party





<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>
7 Chela	3 Chrystal
14 Sunday School	10 Kerri
21 Chris	17 Chrystal
28 Derek	24 Kristin

December AV Schedule

Pre-Confirmation & Confirmation Students			
Communion Assistant		Acolyte	
Dec. 3	Blaine	Dec. 7	Dawson
Dec. 10	Hudson	Dec. 14	None
Dec. 17	Jillian	Dec. 21	Paige
		Dec. 24	Emrick

Weekly Worship Helpers:
 Please use the link below to check:
<https://gracelutheranparker.com/weekly-worship-helpers>
 Thank you

The Parker Food Backpack Program is collecting hygiene items.

On December 14th some of our high school youth will put together a hygiene care kit which will include a towel and washcloth to be distributed to those that receive a weekly food sack.

Items needed include: shampoo, conditioner, body wash, mesh sponge, toothbrush, toothpaste, bar soap, deodorant, hairbrush.

Thank you!

Decorating the Sanctuary

The Alter and Banner committee would like to thank all who stayed after church on Sunday, November 23, to help decorate for Advent and prepare the church for Christmas. We would especially like to thank our Frogs leader, Jenn Wall, and our Jr. Frogs leader, Chrystal Schulte, for encouraging our youth to come and help be a part of this day. Shout out to Hudson as well who we missed in the group picture, but he was there helping, too.



The group picture is Joe, Logan, Aleeus, Landon, Lily, Jillian, Kyndel, Jaylea, Brenna, Blaine, Emmerick, Paige, Blake, and Everly.



We are THANKFUL!

Josie and Marci Leberman taught Sunday school on November 23.

They had a great time making these Thankful boards with the kids.

They took them home and will hopefully change out the cards every week. Hoping it provides a time for the family to come together and talk about what they are thankful for and who they can pray for.



Vaun Becker



Maryn Penning



Morgan Cotton



Willow Plenis



Aubrey Plenis



Brooks Plenis



Adley Penning



Maliah Felsheim



Henry Johnson



Meals with a Mission

Christmas boxes

This year Meals with a Mission is handing out Christmas boxes with some hams that were donated to us. We would like your help, if you know someone or a family who is going through a hard time. We would like to help by giving them a Christmas box. Please reach out to us with their information. We are collecting donations to help fill the boxes. Help us spread some Christmas cheer.

Donation drop off locations can be found in Parker at: Grace Lutheran Church, St. Christina Catholic Church and Jones Foods. Accepting donations until December 15th.

Below is a list of items (except ham) that we are looking for. If you would like to make a direct donation with any cold sensitive items or have any questions, please reach out to Kari Reynolds at 507-829-0603. Thank you!

Each box will contain:

- Ham (already provided)
- Potatoes (5 lb. bag or instant)
- Gravy (jar or packet)
- Dinner rolls
- 2 cans green beans
- Can cream of mushroom
- French fried onions
- 2 cans of corn
- Stuffing
- Pie filling (apple, cherry, blueberry)
- Pie crust (2, for bottom and top)



Grace Lutheran Church

Council Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, October 8, 2025

Council Members Present:

Joel Plucker, Missy Gillespie, Kristi Nogelmeier, Derrek Sattler, Pastor Henrique, Marci Leberman, Tristin Plenis, Alexxis McKenney, and Kaylyn Andersen

1. Call to Order

- Meeting called to order by Joel Plucker.

2. Devotion

- Led by Pastor Henrique.

3. Approval of Agenda

- Motion to approve by Kaylyn, seconded by Derrek.
- Motion carried – all aye.

4. Treasurer's Report

- Year-to-date formulas were off; however, the total balance is accurate.
- Benevolence for September was \$500.
- Motion to approve by Kaylyn, seconded by Marci.
- Motion carried – all aye.

5. Secretary's Report

- Motion to approve by Kristi, seconded by Missy.
- Motion carried – all aye.

6. Pastor's Report

- Pre-Confirmation and Confirmation students will be reciting scripture knowledge in church on October 26th.
- The Bishop will visit Grace Lutheran on December 21st.
- Motion to approve by Derrek, seconded by Tristin.
- Motion carried – all aye.

7. Deacons' Report

- Organists secured for October and November.
- Songs have been selected.
- Continuing to explore alternatives in case organists are unavailable.

Pulpit Supply:

- Pastor Lon will provide coverage on November 16th.
- Larry P. will provide coverage on November 23rd.
- Joel – to be confirmed.

8. Board of Education Report

- Children's Christmas concert scheduled for December 14th with senior frogs serving the meal after the concert.
- \$314 from the fishbowl offering was donated to the Parker School lunch program.

9. Trustees' Report

- Luke's Plumbing has fixed the kitchen sink.
- Marci showcased the new sign cover.
- Fellowship Hall window has been replaced.

10. Congregational Input

Items Discussed:

- All Saints Sunday Service (first Sunday in November).

11. Old Business

1. Church Sign Inserts
2. Holy Playground – Chela will be registering for this grant.
3. Membership Directory – Marci will be initiating.

12. New Business

- **Don Nolan – Fair Stand Follow-Up**
 - Due to an increase in expenses, our net profit was down slightly.
 - Don noted that we have not increased prices despite recent increases in expenses.
 - Due to an issue with Hy-Vee, the church received 4-H's ordered pies.
 - Don suggested considering a donation to 4-H to cover some of the cost.
- **Fair Stand Disbursement has been designated and will be documented in the treasurer's report.**
 - Motion by Kaylyn, seconded by Derrek.
 - Motion carried – all aye.
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- **Shetek**
 - Guardians will be required to fill out a camper contract before camp attendance.
 - Motion by Kaylyn, seconded by Derrek.
 - Motion carried – all aye.
- **ACH Changes/Form Update**
- **Shetek Mission**
- **Next Council Meeting**
 - Scheduled for Wednesday, November 12, 2025 (verify date—original note repeated October 8).

Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn by Tristin, seconded by Marci.
- Motion carried – all aye.

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH TREASURER'S REPORT 10/1/2025-10/31/2025

INCOME:	<u>Current</u>	<u>Year To Date</u>
101 General Offering	\$11,700.40	\$99,252.02
102 Envelope Offering	\$980.00	\$14,200.00
103 Quarterly Offering	\$1,385.00	\$11,845.00
104 Lenten Offering		\$4,273.00
109 Camper Savings	\$0.00	\$1,765.00
202 Use of Building		
203 Misc. Income		\$107.77
205 Thrivent	\$20.00	\$569.00
208 Amazon Smile		
219 Transfer from Building Fund	\$0.00	\$18,583.49
TOTAL INCOME:	\$14,085.40	\$148,830.28

SUMMARY GENERAL CHECKING:

Beginning Balance 1/1/2025	\$6,125.77
Total Income	\$148,830.28
Total Expenses	\$154,791.47
Ending Balance	\$164.58

Monthly Summary	<u>Offering Total</u>	<u>Misc Income</u>	<u>Monthly Expenses</u>
January	\$11,926.00	\$212.77	\$11,927.50
February	\$16,156.00	\$173.00	\$12,393.46
March	\$14,293.00	\$80.00	\$16,535.32
April	\$16,670.00	\$7,576.00	\$21,719.60
May	\$12,791.00	\$0.00	\$13,196.32
June	\$10,496.79	\$0.00	\$12,772.39
July	\$12,194.00	\$25.00	\$11,745.02
August	\$14,355.58	\$0.00	\$11,778.51
September	\$8,132.25	\$11,173.49	\$33,665.72
October	\$12,730.40	\$20.00	\$9,057.63
November			
December			
Total	\$129,745.02	\$19,260.26	\$154,791.47

SAVINGS / OTHER ACCOUNT BALANCES:

First Savings Campers Savings	\$3,431.54
First Savings Building Fund Savings	\$37,374.68
First Savings Bank Money Market	\$3,508.52
River's Edge Bank CD	\$43,483.11

River's Edge Bank Building Loan Approx. Balance **\$0 - PAID IN FULL**

Kristi Nogelmeier, Treasurer

EXPENSES: SALARIES/BENEFITS	<u>Current</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>	<u>Proposed Budget</u>
301 Pastor Salary/Benefits/Pension	\$4,089.68	\$43,855.09	\$54,000.00
302 Pastor Housing Allowance	\$1,575.00	\$15,750.00	\$18,900.00
303 Employer Paid Pension/Retirement	\$0.00	\$5,885.82	\$7,848.00
304 Pastor SECA Allowance	\$464.75	\$4,672.74	\$5,577.00
305 Pastor Car Allowance	\$0.00	\$1,153.67	\$2,000.00
307 Employer Paid Pastor Insurance - Health & Benefits	\$0.00	\$15,936.30	\$21,000.00
308 Pastor Continuing Education	\$0.00	\$946.06	\$1,000.00
320 Custodian	\$267.82	\$2,152.92	\$7,000.00
321 Organist	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,560.00
322 Secretary	\$1,211.63	\$8,459.25	\$12,000.00
323 Groundskeeper	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$3,000.00
325 Sub Pastor	\$0.00	\$705.52	\$2,000.00
326 FICA Expenses	\$0.00	\$1,530.92	\$2,500.00
TOTAL EXPENSES-SALARIES/BENEFITS:	\$7,608.88	\$101,048.29	\$138,385.00

EXPENSES: BUILDING & GROUNDS	<u>Current</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>	<u>Proposed Budget</u>
401 Snow Removal	\$0.00	\$394.00	\$2,500.00
402B Natural Gas	\$13.79	\$2,015.98	\$3,000.00
405 Electricity and Water	\$367.68	\$3,645.51	\$4,750.00
407 Insurance	\$0.00	\$8,881.26	\$10,000.00
408 Misc. Bldg. & Grnd. Exp.	\$759.02	\$23,546.68	\$5,000.00
409 Piano Tuning	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$175.00
409A Organ Maintenance	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$200.00
413 State Farm - Workmen's Comp.	\$0.00	\$500.21	\$700.00
415 Audio Visual Expenses	\$0.00	\$618.01	\$1,000.00
416 Building Loan Payments	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
TOTAL EXPENSES-BUILDING & GROUNDS:	\$1,140.49	\$39,601.65	\$32,325.00

EXPENSES: CHURCH PROGRAMS	<u>Current</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>	<u>Proposed Budget</u>
502 Bible Camp Sponsorships	\$0.00	\$2,405.50	\$1,100.00
503 Offering Envelopes	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$400.00
504 Confirmation Expense	\$69.25	\$777.16	\$1,500.00
506 Synod Assembly	\$0.00	\$600.00	\$750.00
507 Books and Materials	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$100.00
508 Misc. Program Expense	\$116.81	\$452.61	\$4,000.00
512 Bank Service Charges	\$17.95	\$179.50	\$250.00
517 Bibles for 3rd Graders	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$200.00
519 Postage	\$0.00	\$282.40	\$400.00
524 Lenton Meals	\$0.00	\$551.32	\$1,200.00
526 High School Graduate Gifts	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$300.00
TOTAL EXPENSES-CHURCH PROGRAMS:	\$204.01	\$5,248.49	\$10,200.00

EXPENSES: MISSIONS/BENEVOLENCES	<u>Current</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>	<u>Proposed Budget</u>
602 Augustana PACT	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
603 ELCA Benevolence	\$0.00	\$4,000.00	\$6,000.00
604 Shetek Bible Camp	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$650.00
605 Crossroads Conference Dues	\$0.00	\$27.60	\$0.00
615 The Banquet	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$750.00
TOTAL EXPENSES-MISSIONS:	\$0.00	\$4,027.60	\$8,400.00

EXPENSES: OFFICE	<u>Current</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>	<u>Proposed Budget</u>
701 Copier Lease	\$0.00	\$1,680.24	\$2,000.00
702 Bulletins and Inserts	\$0.00	\$1,388.78	\$2,000.00
703 Church Office Phone/Internet	\$104.25	\$1,303.10	\$1,500.00
704 Office Supplies	\$0.00	\$493.32	\$900.00
TOTAL EXPENSES - OFFICE:	\$104.25	\$4,865.44	\$6,400.00

GRAND TOTAL EXPENSES:	\$9,057.63	\$154,791.47	\$195,710.00
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