

Light of Grace

A monthly publication of:

GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

1120 17th street South, Moorhead, MN 56560-5752

Office Phone: (218) 233-1857 Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 9:00 AM-1:00 PM

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Church E-Mail Address: graceunitedmethodist@gmail.com

December 1, 2024

Church Website: www.graceumcmoorhead.org

Pastor: Taylor Johnson

Pastor's E-mail Address: graceunitedmethodistpastor@gmail.com

Sunday Worship: 10:00 AM

Pastor's Cell Phone (218) 422-6586

Children's Sunday School 10:15 AM

Greetings:

"A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices" -O Holy Night

As I've grown older I've truly come to appreciate the season of Advent. Not just as a sneak preview of Christmas, but as reflection on the current state of our hearts. Take yourself back to the setting of Jesus' birth over 2,000 years ago. The Hebrew people found themselves in a season of silence, yearning to hear from God. Post-exile despair and sorrow still surrounded their hearts, even after more than 450 years had passed. Yet in the midst of it all, there were whispers, whispers of hope and anticipation, promises being fulfilled and something profound coming from God. A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices.

Many of you might be feeling similar to the Hebrew people of the time. It's been a long season of frustration, silence, despair, etc. Whether it's something going on in the world, the community, your family, or in your heart, your particular world is weary. We are desperate for a sign of hope, a break of light in the darkness that shadows our hearts, honestly waiting for anything at all. Perhaps you've said or asked, "There's so much going on, it's hard to find joy" or, "how can we celebrate this year?"

The beauty of the season of Advent is it can help move our hearts from weary to rejoicing. It's not adding more festive events to the calendar to distract us from our felt realities. It's more than trying to create an experience to reset our spirits. Aside from a select few major characters, like Mary and Joseph, Elizabeth, Herrod, and a

stunned group of shepherds, not much changed during that season. Advent, for many of us, won't be a one time, big moment that suddenly changes all our circumstances (although

I doubt anyone would complain). It's a drawn out season that shifts our perspective and calls us to deep reflection and prayer. We'll have lots of opportunities throughout the month for this to happen. During our Advent sermon series,

you're invited to consider the *Preparations* and the *Passion* of Advent, so that we might embrace the Presence and *Promise* of Christ who comes.

I want to encourage you to lean into the beauty of the season, even when it calls us to acknowledge and address our current heartaches, both collectively and individually. Encourage one another, sing loud, worship fully. May we, even in a weary world, experience the thrill of hope that is Jesus' transforming power in our lives!



Advent Sermon Series- "Come, Let Us Adore Him"

December 1- Preparations

Jeremiah 33:14-16, Luke 21:25-36

December 8- Passion

Malachi 3:1-4, Luke 1:68-79

December 15- Grace UMC All Church
Christmas Program

December 22- Promise

Micah 5:2-5a, Luke 1:39-55

December 24- Joy

Isaiah 9:2-7, Luke 2:1-20



PRAYER LIST AT Care Facilities

- Pat Walter (Elim)
- Don Walter (Pioneer House)
- Luann Larson (River Pointe)
- Will Wehrman (Eventide—Fargo)
- Shirley Mohr (Serenity)



Ministry TEAM Program. A Way of Being the Church at GUMC! The TEAM's mission is to provide ushers, greeters, opening welcome and readers to our congregation. TEAM #5 (December/June)
 701-866-0686—C. & D. Burkhardt
 701-293-9270—R. & L. Burkhardt
 701-361-3586—L. Gibson
 701-261-6490—R. Hartog
 218-790-2141—L. & P. Horner
 218-236-8056—P. & T. Newgard
 218-233-3969—R. Richman
 701-200-8413—C. & L. Warriner
 701-630-8035—E. & A. Ybarra

PRAYER LIST at home

- Linda Gibson Larry Possehl
- Del Larson Eddie Ybarra
- Wally Walseth

DONUTS



The donut makers are on a Holiday Break and would like to take everyone who helped make or purchased donuts. They will return to make your favorite treats again on January 8th. You may place your order for \$10.00 a dozen by using

the sign up sheet on the table in the Welcome Center, calling the office, 218-233-1857 or the web site: www.graceumcmoorhead.org/donuts.

December Birthdays

- 1—T. Grow
J. Miller
- 4—M. Hamm
- 6—C. Bellon
- 7—D. Graning
- 12—S. Whatley
- 14—S. Grow
- 15—R. Burkhardt
P. Welsh
B. Chandler
D. Bellon
- 17—J. Bellon
- 18—G. Clifton
- 22—S. Simmons
- 25—C. Burkhardt
- 27—G. Welsh
- 28—J. Eide
A. Burkhardt



CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

The church office will be closed on Wednesday, December 25th and Wednesday, January 1st for the holidays.

YEAR END GIFTS

Please remember that all year end gifts for 2024 must be in the office or postmarked by December 31 in order to be counted for this year. If making donations for 2024 and 2025, please make two checks.



December Anniversaries

- 12—J. & K. Enkers

CHRISTMAS EVE

Christmas Eve Candle Light Service is Tuesday, December 24th at 5:00 pm.



WORSHIP AT GRACE

10:00 A.M.

WORSHIP SERVICES are livestreamed on Facebook and on the website: graceumcmoorhead.org

Offerings may be mailed to Grace UMC, 1120 17th Street South, Moorhead, MN 56560

Online giving available through Givelify! Go to graceumcmoorhead.org/give and click the button to make your one time or recurring gift.

WHAT IS PRAYER?

Del Larson, CLM

Have you ever found your mind drifting away thinking of other things when you are saying the Lord's Prayer, or any prayer? Why does that happen? Why is it difficult for us to remain focused at the most important time of our lives?

I believe that prayer is the connection we have with God. Talking with God is better than picking up the phone, or using social media, to have a conversation with your best friend, unless they have received God's wisdom. God is there, but how do you know that you have God's ear if you can't hear His voice? While preparing October's newsletter article, God made a very strong suggestion to me to start working on a prayer article, which will probably be three or four articles into the future. I found it very interesting how God showed me other articles from my devotions to magazines stories on prayer over the past couple of months. It never fails, when we open ourselves to talking to God, how He guides us on the path He wants us to take. His guiding light shows up on that path to get us to where He wants us to be, if we are listening. I love these aha moments when new ideas pop into my head.

I remember when I first was married and I had lots of wild school ideas that my wife, Luann, would say, "You can't do that!" Then I would go out and do most of them. She then caught on and started to use it against me, "I don't know what we are going to do? The dishwasher isn't working right so WE will have to do the dishes by hand from now on!" After hours of trying to fix the dishwasher, it didn't take me long to go buy a new one. You see, too many times we don't listen carefully to God and try to do things our way, rather than His.

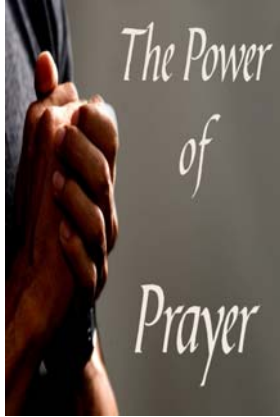
Prayer is more than just asking for something. Prayer is the hot line that connects us directly to God. Prayer builds our relationship with Him, to help get rid of crossed wires or static in our life, and better able to hear Him. Some people say they don't have a clear connection with God, and feel the line might be dead. God does not have a loud microphone, but rather

connects in other ways, like dreams, or whispers. For me, I find it on what he puts in front of me, like stories, at the right time. To have a clearer connection, we need to have a better relationship with God. Most often when we are in prayer with Him, it's at the dinner table, bedtime, or in a crisis when we need help immediately. A relationship with God must be more than this. Rather than reciting the same prayer we grew up on as children, give your own personal thanks. Share from the heart.

According to Sam Thorne, a Bible student in 1962, and ordained in 1974, "To make the Lord's Prayer meaningful and spiritually enriching we must take it in the context in which Jesus presented it to us. Before Jesus gave His disciples the Lord's Prayer, He told them not to use repetitions of prayers. Therefore, they were not to keep repeating the Lord's Prayer."

We always use it in church as a reminder of what we should pray and to teach us the words to use. The Lord's Prayer is written in phrases. Your mind is faster than the words that come out of your mouth. So as you say each phrase, *Our Father who art in Heaven*, visualize those words. What is Heaven? *Hallowed be your name*, how can you honor God's name? *Your kingdom come*, what will that look like when Christ comes down from Heaven to get us? *Your will be done, on earth as in heaven*. Is this the time Christ will divide the people who are lifted up to Heaven, and others sent to the sea of fire? Take time to really think about this prayer rather than just say the words. Make the connection. Then use it to guide your prayer.

Start giving God credit for all that happens to you. Whether a promotion, a healthy report, success of your children, or how God helped you overcome the struggles in your family, at work, health, or the nation. Look for how God is helping to guide you through the storms of life. Without His help where would you be? If you really want to hear God, make numerous connections with Him daily. Use the old favorite prayers as a guide, but let God know what you really feel. If your prayer isn't answered, BE PATIENT! We lost the chance at a perfect life long, long ago. God works in mysterious ways, and has a plan for each of us.



Grace UMC

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

Scripture list from *A Calendar of Devotions 2024 UMC*

- Dec. 1 ~ Jeremiah 33:14-16 ~ Box of Cereal
- Dec. 2 ~ Psalm 25:1-5 ~ Peanut Butter
- Dec. 3 ~ Psalm 25:6-10 ~ Stuffing Mix
- Dec. 4 ~ 1 Thessalonians 3:9-10 ~ Boxed Potatoes
- Dec. 5 ~ Luke 21:25-28 ~ Mac and Cheese
- Dec. 6 ~ Luke 21:29-33 ~ Canned Fruit
- Dec. 7 ~ 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13 ~ Canned Tomatoes
- Dec. 8 ~ Malachi 3:1-4 ~ Canned Tuna
- Dec. 9 ~ Luke 1:68-75 ~ Box of Desserts
- Dec. 10 ~ Luke 1:76-79 ~ Jar of Applesauce
- Dec. 11 ~ Philippians 1:3-8 ~ Canned Sweet Potatoes
- Dec. 12 ~ Philippians 1:9-11 ~ Cranberry Sauce
- Dec. 13 ~ Luke 3:1-3 ~ Canned Beans
- Dec. 14 ~ Luke 3:4-6 ~ Box of Crackers
- Dec. 15 ~ Zephaniah 3:14-20 ~ Package of Rice
- Dec. 16 ~ Isaiah 12:2-6 ~ Instant Oatmeal
- Dec. 17 ~ Philippians 4:4-7 ~ Package of Pasta
- Dec. 18 ~ Luke 3:10-18 ~ Spaghetti Sauce
- Dec. 19 ~ Micah 5:2-5 ~ Chicken Noodle Soup
- Dec. 20 ~ Psalm 80:1-7 ~ Tomato Soup
- Dec. 21 ~ Hebrews 10:5-10 ~ Can of Corn
- Dec. 22 ~ Luke 1:41-55 ~ Can of Mixed Veggies
- Dec. 23 ~ Isaiah 9:2-7 ~ Can of Carrots
- Dec. 24 ~ Psalm 96 ~ Can of Green Beans

Bring filled box to Grace UMC on Christmas Eve

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM



Invite your grandparents! Invite your friends! Invite everyone! We are excited for our All Church Christmas Program during worship on December 15th at 10:00 am. Our program will feature our Grace Kids and Youth, Grace UMC Choir, as we celebrate the Christmas season!

CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR NEW LIFE CENTER GUESTS



We are again collecting **new** items to be given as Christmas gifts to guests residing at the New Life Center. Donated items can be brought to church until Sunday, December 15th. There is a collection box in the church Welcome Center.

Requested items this year are:

Men's Thermal Underwear - tops and Bottoms, all sizes: extra large, 2X, 3X in particular

Winter hats and gloves

flannel shirts and sweatshirts: large and extra large sizes

Men's boxers: all sizes and colors

If you would like us to do your shopping for you, please give your cash donation to either Phyllis Murray or Kathy Anderson

Questions? Call K. Anderson, 218-329-6477
or P. Murray, 701-361-2745

Thank you again for your support of this critical Mission!

CHURCH CONFERENCE SUMMARY

Wow! What a wonderful opportunity we had to celebrate God's work through Grace UMC. Over 70 people were in attendance for our Church Conference on Sunday, November 17th, with 55 voters present. Thank you for being invested in our work to be the church of the neighborhood, making followers of Jesus Christ to transform the world!



YOUTH NEWS!

Hello, Grace!

I'm E. Beck with November's Youth Recap. I will, however, start with the final week in October, just after Trunk-or-Treat. The youth enjoyed a Halloween Party on Wednesday the 30th; the evening was spent playing games and hanging out! While October was wrapped up with laughter and fun, this month began with a sensitive topic: the election. Right away at our first November Youth Group, Pastor Taylor reminded us about the importance of maintaining a safe space where all people's views are heard and respected. Our discussion revolved around the fact that despite anyone's political views, we are all treasured children of God and are called to love one another. This is important for everyone to understand regardless of who we support politically. To help lighten the mood after a week of heavy conversation, we enjoyed a night of games and connection the following Wednesday.

Wednesday the 20th was an exciting night for the youth! All November, we were looking forward to serving at Dorothy Day and Micah's Mission. Dorothy Day Food Pantry aims to help ease food insecurity by providing food to those in need, serving 150-200+ households 4 days a week, and distributing around 2 million pounds of food annually. The youth helped out by volunteering from 4:00 to about 5:00 to package food at the pantry. Of the many jobs done at such a facility, ours was to sort potatoes and onions and bag tartar sauce packets. Afterward, we got dinner and headed over to Micah's Mission- the largest shelter between Minneapolis and Denver! This emergency shelter is located in the Fargo-Moorhead area; they provide clothing, shelter, food, etc. to those in desperate need. The Youth Group helped sort through donated clothing and winter gear scheduled to be given out the following day. We worked until 7:00, at which time we returned to the church. While packaging sauce packets and sorting clothes may not seem very important, volunteering is vital to these programs.

Both Dorothy Day Food Pantry and Micah's Mission function under the organization Churches United. Recently, Churches United has been in desperate need of volunteers and funding as it faces financial challenges. They've called on the public to help meet this need, and the youth have responded by volunteering. If you'd also like to help or just want to learn more, please visit their website: churches-united.org. The youth will continue to look for ways to help those in our community in the following months. Until then, we'll spend our Wednesday nights in the youth room, growing in our faith.

Grace United Methodist

December 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10:00 am Worship w/ Communion 10:15 am Sunday School	2 1:00 pm Quilting	3 7:00 pm AA	4 4:30 am Prayer Shawl Ministry 6:00 pm Choir 6:15 pm No Confirmation 7:00 pm Grace Youth Group	5 9:00 am Bulletin Deadline	6	7 2:00 pm WOG Advent Tea
8 10:00 am Worship 10:15 am Sunday School 11:00 am Leadership Team	9 1:00 pm Quilting	10 7:00 pm AA	11 4:30 am Prayer Shawl Ministry 6:00 pm Choir 6:15 pm No Confirmation 6:30 pm Grace Youth Group	12 9:00 am Bulletin Deadline	13	14 10:00 am Grace Kids Christmas Program rehearsal
15 10:00 am Worship w/ Christmas Program	16 1:00 pm Quilting	17 7:00 pm AA	18 4:30 am Prayer Shawl Ministry 6:00 pm Choir 6:15 pm No Confirmation 6:30 pm Grace Youth Group	19 9:00 am Bulletin Deadline	20	21
22 10:00 am Worship 10:15 am Sunday School	23 1:00 pm NO Quilting	24 5:00 Christmas Eve Ser- vice	25 Office Closed	26 9:00 am Bulletin Deadline	27	28
29 10:00 am Worship w/ Meal 10:15 am NO Sunday School	30 1:00 pm NO Quilting	31 7:00 pm AA				

Date	Psalm	OT	Epistle	Gospel
Dec 1	am: 146, 147, pm: 111-113	Amos 1:1-5, 13-2:8	1 Thess 5:1-11	Luke 21:5-19
Dec 2	am: 1, 2, 3, pm: 4, 7	Amos 2:6-16	2 Peter 1:1-11	Matt 21:1-11
Dec 3	am: 5, 6, pm: 10, 11	Amos 3:1-11	2 Peter 1:12-21	Matt 21:12-22
Dec 4	am: 119:1-24, pm: 12, 13, 14	Amos 3:12-4:5	2 Peter 3:1-10	Matt 21:23-32
Dec 5	am: 18:1-20, pm: 18:21-50	Amos 4:6-13	2 Peter 3:11-18	Matt 21:33-46
Dec 6	am: 16, 17, pm: 22	Amos 5:1-17	Jude 1-16	Matt 22:1-14
Dec 7	am: 20, 21, pm: 110, 116, 117	Amos 5:18-27	Jude 17-25	Matt 22:15-22
Dec 8	am: 148-150, pm: 114, 115	Amos 6:1-14	2 Thess 1:5-12	Luke 1:57-68
Dec 9	am: 25, pm: 9, 15	Amos 7:1-9	Rev 1:1-8	Matt 22:23-33
Dec 10	am: 26, 28, pm: 36, 39	Amos 7:10-17	Rev 1:9-16	Matt 22:34-46
Dec 11	am: 38, pm: 119:25-48	Amos 8:1-14	Rev 1:17-2:7	Matt 23:1-12
Dec 12	am: 37:1-18, pm: 37:19-42	Amos 9:1-10	Rev 2:8-17	Matt 23:13-26
Dec 13	am: 31, pm: 35	Haggai 1:1-15	Rev 2:18-29	Matt 23:27-39
Dec 14	am: 30, 32, pm: 42, 43	Haggai 2:1-19	Rev 3:1-6	Matt 24:1-14
Dec 15	am: 63, 98, pm: 103	Amos 9:11-15	2 Thess 2:1-3, 13-17	John 5:30-47
Dec 16	am: 41, 52, pm: 44	Zech 1:7-17	Rev 3:7-13	Matt 24:15-31
Dec 17	am: 45, pm: 47, 48	Zech 2:1-13	Rev 3:14-22	Matt 24:32-44
Dec 18	am: 119:49-72, pm: 49, 53	Zech 3:1-10	Rev 4:1-8	Matt 24:45-51
Dec 19	am: 50, 59, pm: 60, 33	Zech 4:1-14	Rev 4:9-5:5	Matt 25:1-13
Dec 20	am: 40, 54, pm: 51	Zech 7:8-8:8	Rev 5:6-14	Matt 25:14-30
Dec 21	am: 55, pm: 138, 139	Zech 8:9-17	Rev 6:1-17	Matt 25:31-46
Dec 22	am: 24, 29, pm: 8, 84	Gen 3:8-15	Rev 12:1-10	John 3:16-21
Dec 23	am: 61, 62, pm: 112, 115	Zeph 3:14-20	Titus 1:1-16	Luke 1:1-25
Dec 24	am: 45, 46, pm: 89:1-29	Isa 59:1-15a	Gal 3:23-4:7	Lk 1:26-80
Dec 25	am: 2, 85, pm: 132, 110	Zech 2:10-13	1 John 4:7-16	John 3:31-36
Dec 26	am: 28, 30, pm: 145	2 Chron 24:17-22	Acts 6:1-7	[Acts 7:59-8:8]
Dec 27	am: 93.96, pm: 34	Isa 62:6-7, 10-12	Heb 2:10-18	Matt 1:18-25
Dec 28	am: 8, pm: 19, 126	Jere 31:1-17	Rev 21:1-7	Matt 18: 1-14
Dec 29	am: 18:1-20, pm: 18:21-50	Isa 12:1-6	Rev 1:1-8	John 7:37-52
Dec 30	am: 20, 21, pm: 23, 27	Isa 25:1-9	Rev 1:9-20	John 7:53-8:11
Dec 31	am: 46, 48, pm: 90	Isa 26:1-9, Isa 65:15b-25	2 Cor 5:16-6:2	John 8:12-19



TEA TIME

Celebrate the holiday season with Women of Grace! All women and their guests are invited to our Advent Tea, Saturday, December 7th at 2:00 pm. With tea, coffee, and goodies. Included in the program is a presentation for the Grace Women of the Year Award, and . Please bring either a monetary donations or item for the food pantry. There is a sign up sheet for cookies and workers If you have any questions, please contact P. Newgard, 701-367-0574.

NEW DIRECTORIES



A copy of the current directory with your address and phone number is on the table in the Welcome Center. Please take a minute to verify that your contact information is current. If everything is correct put an "ok" by your name or make the necessary corrections.

POINSETTIAS



Order forms for Christmas poinsettias are available at the Welcome Center of the church. This has been a tradition to honor or remember loved ones during the Christmas season. If you purchase a plant for \$10.00 you will be able to take them home after our Christmas Eve service.

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If you didn't indicate you would like offering envelopes for 2025 on your pledge card, but would like a box of envelopes, please sign up on the sheet on the table in the Welcome Center and a box of envelopes will be available for pick up during the month of December

MEAL WORSHIP



On Sunday December 29, we will gather at our normal worship time at 10:00 am for a unique worship experience. We will meet in the Fellowship Hall and worship while sharing a meal together. Rolls and fruit will be provided, if you're interested in bringing food to share, please contact Pastor Taylor. Please note, the online worship experience may be different than normal that day.



LEADERSHIP TEAM HIGHLIGHTS

From your Grace UMC Leadership Team, here is a snapshot of what we discussed during our meeting on Monday, November 11 and Sunday, November 24.

- Staff evaluations took place and reported on. The SPRC made a note of gratitude towards the paid staff of Grace UMC and all the hard work that they do to ensure ministry events are coordinated, communicated, and occur. Thank you to Sondra, Sharon, and Pastor Taylor!
- A budget for 2025 was passed and sent on to Church Conference to share with the congregation. We continue to monitor our spending, fund vital ministry, and support our mission through your financial giving.
- Roof Update- We shared about the current status of the roof, with the Fellowship Hall needing attention soon. On Sunday November 24, the Grace UMC Leadership Team approved a contract with Dalsin Roofing to make repairs to the roof over the Fellowship Hall. We also approved an application for a loan from the Dakotas-Minnesota Foundation to ensure that the project can get moving before any more issues occur. Updates will be coming as ways you can help fund this project in addition to faithful giving!