



HAPPENINGS

FROM THE PASTOR

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The rhythm of the church year swings into anticipation in December. Before we celebrate the birth of the Christ child, we relive the waiting. The world into which Jesus was born ached for the coming Messiah. They lived in the underside of the "glory that was Rome" at its historical height of glory—the reign of Caesar Augustus, the *Pax Romana* bringing world peace.

For the people of Galilee, peace was not all it was cracked up to be. They suffered the weight of all the local oppressions a corrupt system had to offer. The prophet Habakkuk's complaint had to be central to their hearts' meditations:

O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen? Or cry to you "Violence!" and you will not save?

No wonder Mary responds to Elizabeth's blessing by

saying, in part, "He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty."

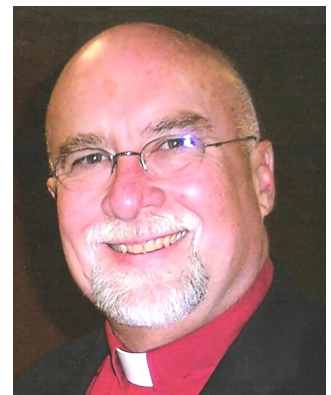
Perhaps this is the Advent message for our time: Why wait for the Messiah if everything is "OK"? Things were not "OK" in ancient Galilee. Things are not "OK" today. From Greece (and Spain and Italy) to Tahrir Square in Cairo, Egypt, from the gridlocked halls of Congress to the pepper-spray soaked sidewalks of UC Davis, it is clear our planet is not in the *season to be jolly*.

Perhaps because uncertainty and crisis pervades the planet, deliverance resonates. After several centuries of attempts at *enlightened self-interest*, it appears that self-interest is never enlightened after all. To whom do we turn?

The verb "to turn" has a specific meaning to us. The Greek word for it in the New Testament is the word we translate as "to repent." We think of lent as the season of repentance. Yet, until the end of the 20th Century, the liturgical colors for Advent and Lent were the identical purple. If during Lent we focus on our personal "turning", perhaps Advent is the time to focus on the world "turning".

(continued on page 3)

*... To whom
do we turn?..."*



WOMEN'S STUDY GROUP

On December 5th, 12th & 19th, we change our pace and consider Advent. *While We Wait: Living the Questions of Advent* includes a chapter to read and daily reflections for each week. There will be an additional week in January for a chapter on Epiphany. **Individual books will need to be ordered.** If you find it difficult to commit to a weekly study for a whole year, you may find this Advent study a good alternative.

Meetings are at Cynthy Nimmer's home at 1:00 PM. Please note the dates (above) for meetings, as they depart from the usual Fridays during this month.

Please contact Cynthy for more information:
370-5766 or 441-5777
ctnsongbird@yahoo.com



The 2012 Grace Church Directory is almost ready to go to print.

This is the last call for any changes or additions.

Be looking for your copy in the Narthex soon.

Women's Annual Christmas Party

Please come to an evening of fun, food, fellowship and friendship!

It all begins at 6 pm at the home of Cynthy Nimmer on Thursday, December 15th.

All you need to bring is the expectation of a grand time and a grab bag gift for a game. **

PLEASE sign up on the poster in the narthex by Sunday, Dec. 11th.



Need more info - Call 441-5777.

(** \$10 suggested-no gags or food items, please)

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

ANNUAL FALL CLEANING

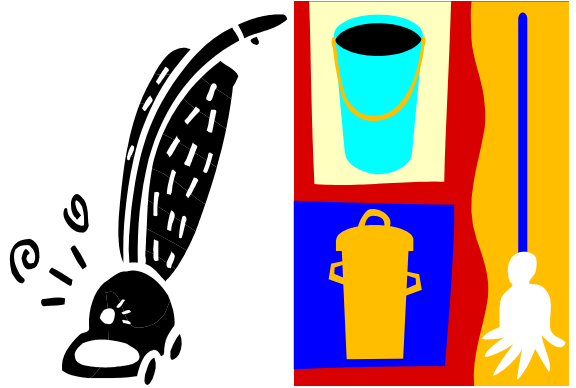
SATURDAY, DEC.3, 2011

It's time to do our annual fall cleaning of the Narthex, Sanctuary, and the kitchen to ready our church for the Christmas season. A work day is planned for Saturday, December 3rd, from 8 AM - 12 NOON.

There is a poster in the Narthex with a list of jobs needing to be done. Cleaning supplies will be provided. For those who sign up to vacuum the pews, please bring your own vacuum cleaner.

Thank you,

Marion Elliott



FROM THE PASTOR (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

As no one preparing for God to manifest on earth could have known, the Messiah, Jesus, was to be—the suffering servant who calls upon us to take up our cross and follow, so we “see in a mirror, dimly”. When we pray for peace, for justice, we pray for what we know—peace and justice the way it used to be.

During Advent, we recall Jesus’ constant admonitions to *stay awake* for the hour that is coming. I believe we’re challenged to let go of what used to be and open ourselves to what’s coming, to live from the future as it emerges. God has mercy and goodness in mind for each of us, for our community and for our planet. May we “turn” ourselves to perceive.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



- 12/4 David Halverson
- 12/5 Chris Powell
- 12/10 Rosemary Nottke
- 12/15 Rev. Jo Page
- 12/16 Ken Harris
- 12/18 Sandy Augstein-Collins
- Peter Coppola
- Deb Hahn
- 12/27 Ellen Harris

Since this is the month we celebrate Jesus’ birthday—it ‘s a good time to think about your birthday. We have some birthdates, but we don’t have everyone’s. If we have “missed” your birthday . . . in the newsletter or in the Church directory . . . it’s because we don’t have the date. If you’d like it printed in either or both of those publications, please let the office know, and we’ll correct it right away. Wishing everyone a Happy Birthday, this month and every month!



From the Church Office

Financial Report

Submitted by Glenn Gerber

Grace 2011 income and expenses against goals:

<u>Overall</u> <u>Budget</u>	<u>October</u>	<u>Annual</u> <u>Budget</u>	<u>YTD</u> <u>Projections</u>	<u>YTD</u> <u>Actuals</u>	<u>Differences</u>
Income	\$ 7,407	\$ 109,160.	\$ 83,259.	\$ 74,322.	-\$ 8,927.
Expenses	\$ 11,258	\$ 148,543.	<u>\$ 120,346.</u>	\$ 115,837.	- \$ 4,509.
Difference	-\$ 3,851.	- \$ 39,383.	- \$37,177.	- \$ 41,515.	-\$ 4,418.

Envelope Giving (Included in above Total Income amount)

\$ 6,535	\$ 98,000.	\$ 74,748.	\$ 66,352	-\$ 8,396
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During October Grace's overall income was \$ 14,407., with operating budget income totaling

\$ 7,407..The shortfall in income required a transfer of \$7,000 from the "working cash" Mission Plus Bond Fund account to the checking account to meet expenses. Envelope receipts for the month totaled \$6,535. Currently the year-to-date actual envelope income of \$ 66,352 is \$8,396 less than the projected value of \$ 65,994.

Total and operating budget expenses for the month were \$ 11,258 All operating budget expenses were as expected.

Year-to-date budgeted income totals \$ 74,332.while the operating budget expenses are \$ 115,837. leaving a current deficit for 2011 of \$ 41,506.

The Financial Team works diligently to manage expenses against income. With 2011 fast approaching year end and with our envelope income currently being \$8,396 less than projected, please remember to bring your envelope giving up-to-date by the end-of December to enable Grace to meet its financial commitments.

2012 Lutheran Magazine Subscription

Submitted by Glenn Gerber



To all Grace Lutheran Church Members ,

Several years ago Grace Members voted to eliminate the cost of *The Lutheran Magazine* from Grace's operating budget. However, those members who wished to receive *The Lutheran Magazine* agreed to pay a reduced cost to continue to receive the magazine. In 2011 ten (10) families signed up for a subscription to *The Lutheran Magazine*.

It's time to sign-up and pay \$11.75 for a 2012 subscription to *The Lutheran Magazine*. This article is a reminder and a request to the 10 current subscribers and to anyone else who may want to subscribe for 2012. If you subscribe as a group subscriber through Grace the cost is \$11.75/year rather than the normal \$17.95/year for an individual subscription.

If you wish to continue your subscription to *The Lutheran Magazine* or start a new subscription for 2012 please complete the form below and either mail it to Grace or place it in the Offering Plate.

In order to keep our subscription mailing list accurate I would appreciate hearing from our 12 current subscribers: Ted Beebe, Ellen Cash, Glenn Gerber, Jo-Ann Hagymas, M/M William Hebert, Catherine Joynson, Virginia Kelley, Merle Longwood, M/M Ronald Nimmer, and M/M Roland Peteler.

Please return your subscription form and payment by Sunday, December 18, 2011.

Thank You,

Glenn Gerber

If you have questions contact me. Phone 355-9570 or e-mail: glengerber@msn.com.

-----Cut Along Dotted Line-----

2012 *The Lutheran Magazine* Subscription Form

NAME: _____





ADDRESS: _____

Submit this form with \$ 11.75 (check ___ Payable to Grace Lutheran Church or cash ___ in an envelope)

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

MONTHLY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

D E C E M B E R 2 0 1 1

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<p>EVERY SUNDAY: 9:30AM—Meditation 10:30AM—Worship with Communion and Sunday School</p>				1 7PM—ADULT STUDY GROUP 7pm-D/B GRP.	2 8pm— AA Mtg.	3 8AM—NOON ANNUAL FALL CLEANING WORK DAY
<p>4 ADVENT 2 Order Poinsettias</p> 	<p>5 1PM—WOMEN'S STUDY GROUP 8pm— AA Mtg.</p>	<p>6 7PM—Council</p>	<p>7 7PM—Choir</p>	<p>8 7PM—ADULT STUDY GROUP 7pm-D/B GRP.</p>	<p>9 8pm— AA Mtg.</p>	<p>10 6 PM SMORGAS- BORD AND DECORATING</p>
<p>11 ADVENT 3 LAST DAY TO ORDER POINSETTIAS</p>	<p>12 1PM—WOMEN'S STUDY GROUP 8pm— AA Mtg.</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14 7PM—Choir</p>	<p>15 6PM—Women's Annual Christ- mas Party 7 PM—Adult Study Group 7pm -D/B GRP.</p>	<p>16 8pm— AA Mtg.</p>	<p>17</p>
<p>18 ADVENT 4 CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM</p>	<p>19 1PM— WOMEN'S STUDY GROUP 7PM—GRACE READING GRP (?) 8pm— AA Mtg.</p>	<p>20 NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE</p>	<p>21 7PM—Choir</p>	<p>22 7PM—ADULT STUDY GROUP 7pm -D/B GRP.</p>	<p>23 8pm— AA Mtg.</p>	<p>24 7 PM CHRISTMAS EVE</p>  <p>CANDLELIGHT SERVICE</p>
<p>25 CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP</p> 	<p>26 8pm— AA Mtg.</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28 7PM—Choir (?)</p>	<p>29 7pm -D/B GRP.</p>	<p>30 8pm— AA Mtg.</p>	 <p>NEW YEAR'S EVE</p>



POINSETTIA ORDERS



It is time to order poinsettia plants to decorate the Altar for Christmas. The plants will cost \$12.00 this year and the cutoff date to place orders is December 11th, 2011. Order forms will be in the church bulletins and a member of the Altar Guild will be in the Narthex before and after service to collect orders **on the next two Sundays, December 4th and December 11th** .

Checks should be made payable to **Grace Lutheran Church** and in the Memo section of your check please write Poinsettia Plants.

Thank You,
Marion Elliott, Altar Guild

Poinsettia Plant Order Form

Given by: _____ (your name)

In Memory/Honor of: _____
(please circle one)

Number of plants ordered: _____

Cost: \$12.00 x number of plants ordered = \$ _____

Deadline to Order Poinsettia Plants

December 11th, 2011





Grace Happenings

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by

Grace Lutheran Church
1930 Hillside Ave.
Niskayuna NY 12309
518-372-0244

Grace Lutheran Church is an inclusive community grounded in the love of God and committed to welcoming all people regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, creed, age or physical ability. We encourage all people to share in thoughtful worship, relevant education, and service through faith in *action*.

LOOKING AHEAD

Page 4

Wishing you all a blessed

Merry
Christmas

and

A HAPPY
NEW YEAR

UPCOMING SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE:



- December 4—Jesus Is Born + Pageant Practice (read through script a couple of times)
- December 11—Pageant Practice, (Dress Rehearsal)
- December 18—Sunday School Christmas Pageant
- December 25—CHRISTMAS DAY—NO SUNDAY SCHOOL

- January 1—NEW YEAR'S DAY—NO SUNDAY SCHOOL
- January 8—Wise Men
- January 15—Jesus' Baptism
- January 22—The Disciples
- January 29—The Lord's Prayer

