

THE WITTENBERG WAY

Dec 2021/Jan 2022 Volume 8, Issue 12



Dear Grace Family,

I am happy to announce that our local organ builder, LW Blackinton & Associates, installed our new organ console and electrical components in November. This completes Phase 1 of our multi-year organ restoration plan. There are still a few minor bugs to work out, but we will be dedicating it to God's service on the third Sunday in Advent. COVID-19 issues delayed this project by over a year, but I am grateful for your prayers and financial contributions that made our Grace Lutheran Organ Restoration (GLORIA) such a success. GLC staff and leadership will be meeting in the new year to develop a plan for the next phase, where our top priority is the construction of a new wind chest.

Our new elevator was also delayed, but thankfully the needed parts have arrived. The plan now is for the elevator to be installed after the Christmas season during the month of January, so access to the Fellowship Hall will be impacted during this time. I am so grateful to those who contributed the financial resources to make this upgrade possible. I'm additionally thankful for all the hard work that our trustee, Paul Himmelberger, put in to plan, bid, and contract this project out. It was no easy thing to accomplish.

In an old Peanuts cartoon, Linus tells Charlie Brown that his grandmother will make a ten-dollar donation to his favorite charity if he will just give up his beloved security blanket. Charlie Brown notes, "Ten dollars is a lot of money. That could be just the amount that would save a life. You'd make a meaningful sacrifice." Linus replied, "And if I don't, I'd feel like a guilty rat."

We have all felt like that when opening end-of-year letters from non-profits asking for donations to support good charitable causes. But I'm not here to guilt-trip you. I don't believe that will bring about any positive change. Instead, we at Grace Lutheran believe in a God who gives and forgives freely, even while we still clutch our security blankets.

We've been blessed as a church to weather the storm of lock-downs, lower attendance, and closing our pre-school the past year and a half. We reduced our budget and cut fiscal corners wherever possible. But as the year comes to a close, we will likely be about \$8K short of making our budget. Grace Lutheran would not exist without the generous financial support of so many. I rarely speak about finances as your pastor, but if you are able, would you please consider helping us make up the shortfall to break even on our budget this year?

Gratefully,

Pr. Brian Thomas

WHAT'S INSIDE

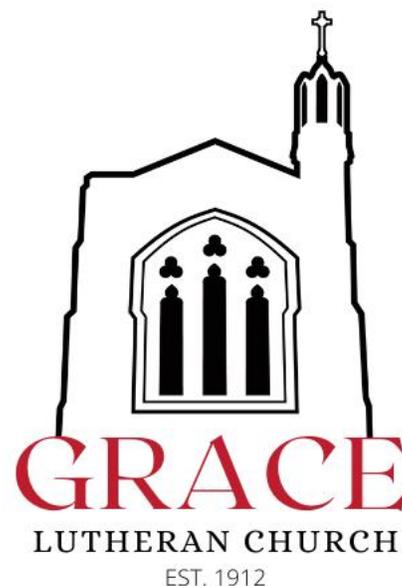
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A Fishy Tale about a Faithful God



Sunday Morning
9:30-10:15 a.m.

Adult Sunday School Class
Beginning January 16, 2022



'TIS THE SEASON: CELEBRATING THE SEASONS OF ADVENT, CHRISTMAS, AND EPIPHANY

BY PR. BRIAN W. THOMAS

The Church calendar year begins with "Advent," which means "coming." This may lead some to ask, "What's coming?" A better question would be, "Who's coming?"

The answer is "Jesus."

The entire Old Testament points to Jesus as the one who was coming, the long-expected Messiah God had promised to bring salvation. Many of the Old Testament readings during the season of Advent quote those ancient prophets who foretold not only who the Messiah would be but what He would accomplish on our behalf.

Another message of this season is that the One who has come is coming again. So the Advent season deals with two comings of Christ--one when Jesus was born in history, and one when He will come again in the future to bring history to a glorious end.

This season is integrally linked, therefore, to the waiting and wondering that accompany pregnancy and birth. Just as pregnancy gives expectant parents time to adjust to the prospect of a new child, so this season provides the opportunity for the church to step back from the surrounding busyness and breathe in the wonder, the expectation, and the hope of Christ's incarnation and return.

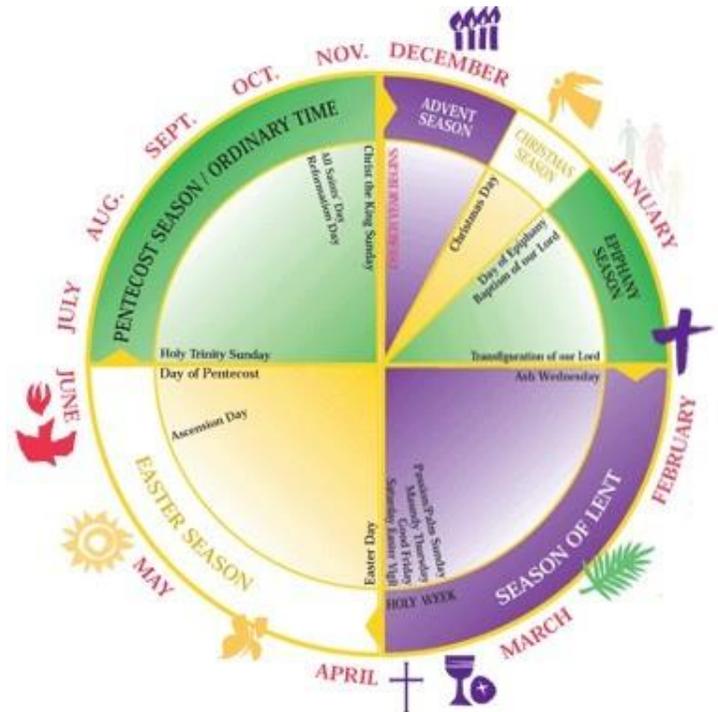
An old Celtic prayer captures this hopeful waiting:

In the mighty name of God,
In the saving name of Jesus,
In the strong name of the Spirit,
we come
we cry
we watch
we wait
we long
for You.

Christmas: The New Born King

"The Lord has come!" The short Christmas season is one of the happiest times of the year. "Christmas" is a shortened form of the old English term "Christ's Mass," the festival service for Christ's birth. On this day, the Christmas message rings out: "God delivered on His promise." God with us--a light in a dark world, a humble King who knows our trials intimately, a sovereign Savior, a source of everlasting peace. He who the heavens could not contain, became so small, allowing Himself to be held in the very hands of sinners He was born to save.

The twelve days of Christmas run from December 25 through January 5 and provide our opportunity to unwrap God's greatest gift to us and the hope that he brings into a world filled with sin, death, and darkness.



Epiphany: Celebrating the Light of the World

The word epiphany is from the Greek word, meaning "revealing" or "appearing." The Day of Epiphany was known in the early church as the "Feast of Manifestation." On this day, the church remembers the visitation of the Magi, mysterious figures from the Near East who traveled to worship the newborn King. Were they disappointed to find Him lying in such humble circumstances with working-class parents? They left extravagant gifts, fit for a king-if only, perhaps, to help the poor family raise the very light of the world.

Epiphany is the time when God's glory in Jesus Christ is increasingly revealed to us. We have waited for Christ to be with us and celebrated His arrival in His birth. Now we begin our journey with the promised One. The texts in this season give us glimpses of who this Jesus is. In Jesus' baptism and transfiguration, the liturgical bookends of the season, God's heavenly voice speaks of Jesus' identity as His beloved Son.

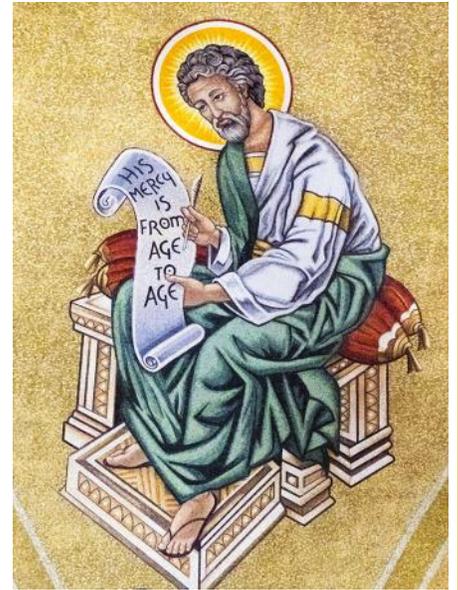
The Year of St. Luke (Cycle C)

This new liturgical year brings us to Cycle C in the three-year lectionary, which means most of the Gospel readings are drawn from St. Luke's Gospel this year. Luke was a doctor who happened to travel with St. Paul on some of his missionary journeys. In addition to his gospel, Luke also wrote the book of Acts. He was a keen journalist, who carefully collected the eye-witness accounts of Jesus' birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, as well as the early history of the church following Pentecost.

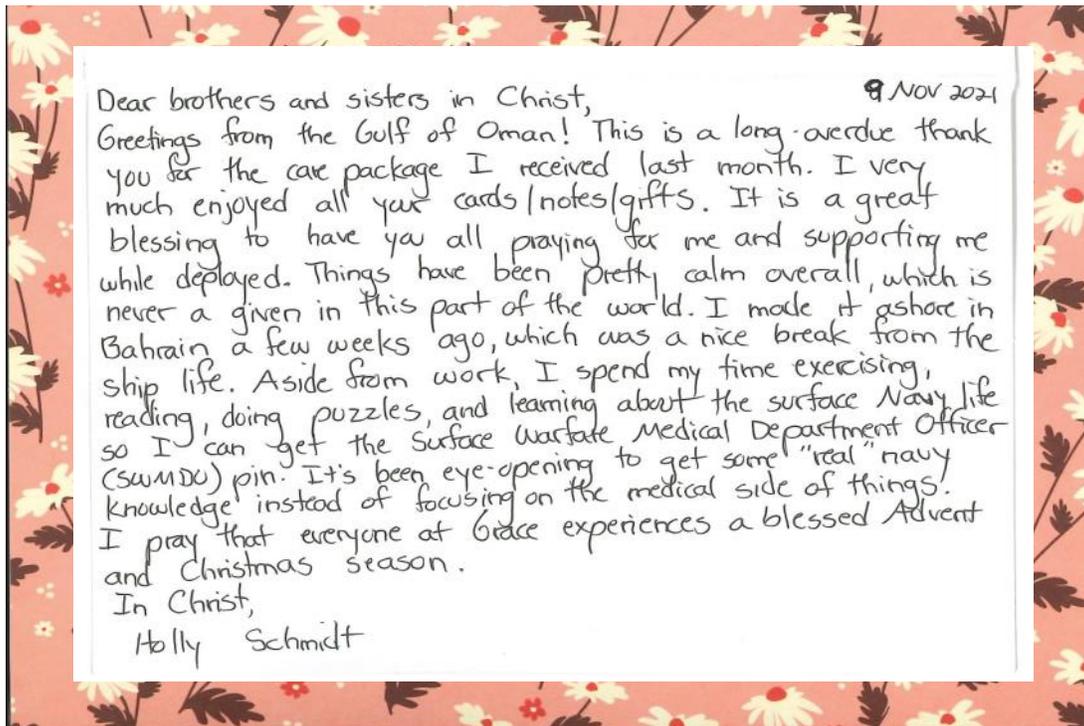
Robert Karris notes, "In Luke's Gospel Jesus is either going to a meal, at a meal or coming from a meal." Even when Jesus is not eating, references to food abound. In many of His parables, he uses food or feasting as a kingdom metaphor, which we'll consider this year. Another prominent theme that Luke reveals is how Jesus goes after the outsider. I like how Eugene Peterson puts it:

Most of us, most of the time, feel left out – misfits. We don't belong...Luke is a most vigorous champion of the outsider. An outsider himself, the only Gentile in an all-Jewish cast of New Testament writers, he shows how Jesus includes those who typically were treated as outsiders by the religious establishment of the day; women, common laborers (shepherders), the racially different (Samaritans), the poor [and the unclean, lepers and other social outcasts]. He will not countenance religion as a club. As Luke tells the story, all of us who have found ourselves on the outside looking in on life with no hope of gaining entrance (and who of us hasn't felt it?) now find the doors wide open, found and welcomed by God in Jesus.

My prayer is that God would bless us as a congregation this year as we learn more about our gracious Savior through the pen of St. Luke.



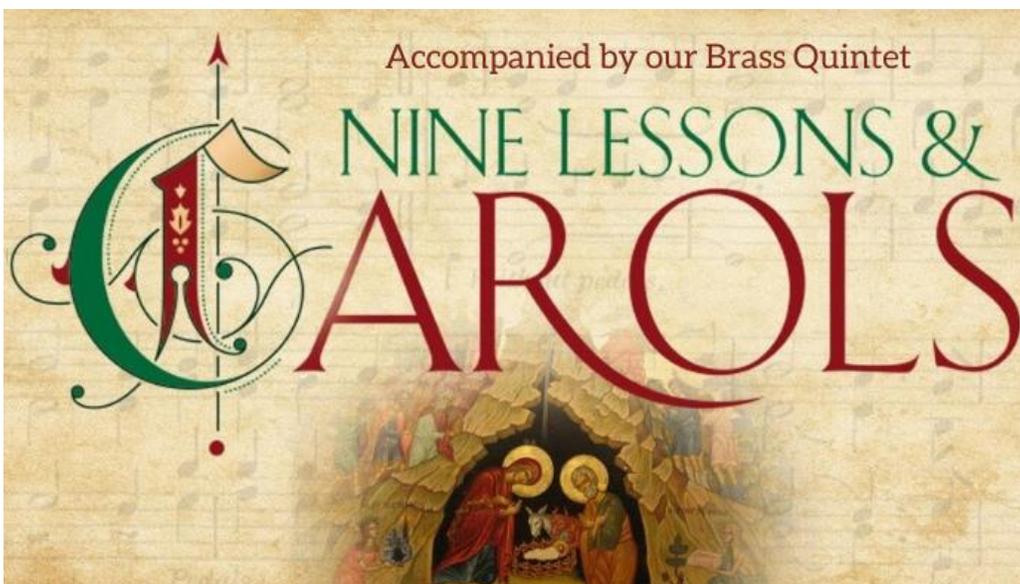
GREETINGS FROM DR. HOLLY SCHMIDT, LCDR



If you would like to send Christmas greetings to Holly, here is her address is: Holly Schmidt, COMPHIBRON ONE, Unit 200235 Box 88, FPO AP 96602.

UPCOMING SERVICES & EVENTS

12/24/21	<i>Christmas Eve</i>	6:00 pm 11:00 pm	<i>Lessons & Carols Candlelight Service</i>
12/25/21	<i>Christmas Day</i>	10:00 am	<i>Christmas Service</i>
12/26/21	<i>Sunday after Christmas</i>	10:00 am	<i>One service</i>
1/2/22	<i>Epiphany Sunday</i> <i>Guest Pastor Rev. Eric Kaelberer</i>	10:00 am	<i>One service</i>
1/8/22	<i>Christmas Clean-up</i> <i>Come help remove the tree and put away the Christmas decor</i>	10:00 am	<i>Saturday morning</i>
1/9/22	<i>Voters' Assembly</i> <i>2022 budget, elect open Council positions, approve Grace Constitution</i>	9:30-10:15 am	<i>Fellowship Hall</i>
1/12/22	<i>Wednesday Bible Study</i>	10:00 am	<i>Fellowship Hall</i>
1/16/22	<i>Sunday School Resumes</i> <i>A Fishy Tale about a Faithful God</i>	9:30-10:15 am	<i>Jonah</i>
3/2/22	<i>Ash Wednesday</i>	Noon, 6 pm	<i>Distribution of Ashes</i>

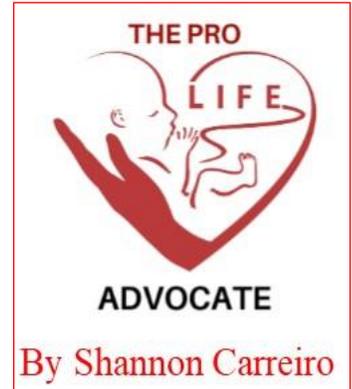


Please Join us as the sacred story of the coming Christ unfolds through Scripture & Song



CHRISTMAS EVE
6:00pm

FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE



I came across this truly amazing fact recently. At 20 weeks’ gestation a female baby already possesses all the oocytes (unfertilized human eggs) she will ever have. In fact, she starts out with around 7 million, but by puberty that number has reduced to just 500. Every one of them holds the potential to become another human being. It is a dazzling bit of science that gives proof to Psalm 139; it is mind-boggling evidence of God’s creative force and His plan for every single individual. That is the genuine definition of awesome.

But that little fact is also a sobering reminder of the real cost and real tragedy of every abortion. Each abortion steals the potential each life held. What might that child have been? What could she have accomplished? What might his children or their children have achieved?

Whose Plan Is It?

The people who support abortion on demand tell us a woman has a right to choose, and often that choice must be made because a pregnancy is inconvenient. It interferes with the woman’s plans. She may have to drop out of college. She may have to sacrifice a job promotion. She may be under intense pressure from family and friends. She just can’t afford a baby at this time. Those are legitimate reasons for delaying lots of things but snuffing out one human’s potentiality to realize another’s is not one of them. During Advent season, it’s especially good to remember that we celebrate and benefit greatly from a pregnancy that might have been seen as inconvenient from a human perspective but was God’s plan from the beginning.

Compassion and Grace

If you know someone in a crisis pregnancy show compassion. Direct her to one of the four San Diego CAPS clinics. Among their free services are non-judgmental, no-pressure counseling (fathers welcome), pregnancy testing, ultrasound and, if requested, adoption referral. If she goes through with the abortion show grace, not by endorsing her choice but by letting her know God loves her no matter what.

For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.

My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!

Psalm 139:13-17 ESV



OUR 2021 OFFERINGS

October Actual \$ 18,577
 Budget \$ 23,333
Shortfall \$ 4,765

November Actual \$ 30,360
 Budget \$ 21,234
 Overage \$ 9,126

YTD (Jan-Nov 30) Actual \$230,204
 YTD (Jan-Nov 30) Budget \$238,727
Shortfall \$ 8,523

2021 Budget \$265,000
 Amount needed By 12/31/21 \$ 26,273

Giving to Grace

- Your weekly envelopes or those provided in the pews
- Online from your bank website
- Scan the QR code to the right
- Text the amount to 84321
- On the Grace Giving Page at gracesandiego.com



GLORIA

GRACE LUTHERAN ORGAN RESTORATION

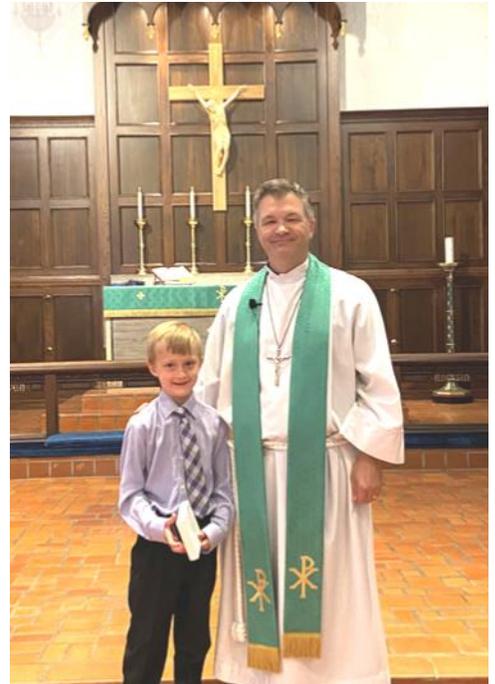


The first phase of our organ restoration is complete. Dale Sorenson's team built a completely new four-manual console that will allow for greater memory capacity and reliable playability. Additionally, we have a new electrical wiring system to replace our rather unreliable one.

An organ is a very complicated thing, so our pastor likes to say that our old organ had dementia and brain surgery was no longer possible. We received an entirely new musical brain and neurological system.



Andrew Gertz received his First Holy Communion a few weeks ago. Afterwards we enjoyed a deliciously decorated cake for fellowship in the courtyard.



Advent decorating with Kelley Schmidt, Rachel Thomas, the Lehman families, Duncan Mellor and Evie Nichols. In the photo at left Robin Segarra introduces her granddaughters to our new organ console.





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The Reverend
Brian W. Thomas
brianwilliamthomas@gmail.com

Director of Parish Music
Beth Schleusener
musicdirector.glc@gmail.com

Church Secretary
Gretchen Jordan
gjordan@gracesandiego.com

Sunday Divine Service
8:00 and 10:30 am

Sunday School
9:30 to 10:15 am

Nursery available

IT'S EASY TO DONATE TO GLC

- Scan the QR code below with your phone
- Text an amount to 84321
- Give through your online banking
- Use your giving envelopes
- Drop your donation in the offering plate.

Thank you!



PRAYERS

PRAYERS FOR STRENGTH AND HEALING

Joyce, Dave, Bill, Steve, Michael, Bernie,
Paul, Mike, Brenda, Terry, Gretchen, and Jack

PRAYERS AWAITING THE ARRIVAL OF A CHILD OF GOD

RJ & Christine

PRAYERS FOR OUR MISSIONARIES

Rev. Dr. John & Melinda Bombaro (Latvia)

PRAYERS FOR OUR MILITARY SERVICE MEMBERS

William Baker, Tajy George, Jack George, Jr., Philip Hawthorne,
Dylan & Linka Jensen, Josh Martin, Matthew Morgan,
Heath Russert, Rev. Dave Schleusener, and Dr. Holly Schmidt

PRAYERS FOR THOSE UNABLE TO ATTEND SERVICES

Lorna Winterstein, Joyce Rochester

DECEMBER & JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

DECEMBER

10 – Vanessa Yates
15- Jeffrey Yoder

13-Travis Wheeler
19- Jennifer Gertz
21- Katharina Hass
24- Jennifer Hass

JANUARY

7- Eleanor Hansen
10- Kate Latham
11- Ingrid Hoffmann

If we missed your birthday, please contact
the church office.

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

CHRISTMAS EVE

Dec. 24, 2021
Psalm 110:1-4
First Reading: Isaiah 7:10-14
Second Reading: 1 John 4:7-16
Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25

BAPTISM OF OUR LORD

Jan. 9, 2022
Psalm 29
First Reading: Isaiah 43:1-7
Second Reading: Romans 6:1-11
Gospel: Luke 3:15-22

CHRISTMAS DAY

Dec. 25, 2021
Psalm 2
First Reading: Isaiah 52:7-10
Second Reading: Hebrews 1:1-6
Gospel: John 1:1-14

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Jan. 16, 2022
Psalm 128
First Reading: Isaiah 62:1-5
Second Reading: I Corinthians 12:1-11
Gospel: John 2:1-11

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Dec. 26, 2021
Psalm 111
First Reading: Exodus 13:1-3a, 11-15
Second Reading: Colossians 3:12-17
Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Jan. 23, 2022
Psalm 19:1-6, 7-14
First Reading: Neh. 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10
Second Reading: I Corinthians 12:12-31a
Gospel: Luke 4:16-30

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Jan. 2, 2022
Psalm 119:97-104
First Reading: 1 Kings 3:4-15
Second Reading: Ephesians 1:3-14
Gospel: Luke 2:40-52

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Jan. 30, 2022
Psalm 71:1-11
First Reading: Jeremiah 1:4-10
Second Reading: I Cor 12:12:31b-13:13
Gospel: Luke 4:31-44