

Grace Lutheran Church
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December 2025

Dear Saints of Grace,

November has come and gone and now we are ready for December once more. With December obviously means Christmas, but for us in the Church—as we know—it also means that before Christmas there is Advent. I am sure I have noted this in numerous December newsletters, but it's always good for us to be reminded, Advent is actually a penitential season. Like Lent, it began in many places in the Early Church as a forty-day season leading up to Christmas (just as Lent does to Easter). However, over the course of time it was shortened to four weeks, the four Sundays before the Feast of Christ's Incarnation. This means that just as in Lent it is appropriate to redirect our focus to the things of our Lord in repentance and discipline. Obviously, that is especially difficult in our day and place as we find ourselves celebrating through the whole month in what we could call "pre-Christmas." However, I would encourage you to try such discipline, as difficult as it might be. As a foundational part of that, we have our Wednesday evening services.

With that, as I do every year, I'll take some time in this newsletter to let you all know what we'll be doing for this year's Advent series. Our theme for this series will be "The Day of the Lord." As I always point out this time of year, the end of the Church Year and the season of Advent draw our attention to the coming of Christ. It begins with looking to Christ's return at the end of time and then shifts to the coming of Christ at the first Christmas. With that, the theme of "The Day of the Lord," is very appropriate for this season. For the series we will look at the Day of the Lord in three parts. The first Wednesday will look at the Day of the Lord as a day of wrath and judgment. Obviously, that is a difficult topic to hear, but we can do so knowing that Christ has taken upon Himself God's wrath on the cross so that we can be sheltered from the wrath we deserve on the day of judgment. The second Wednesday will shift to looking at the Day of the Lord as a day of hope and holiness. The holiness of God is something we don't necessarily consider in our day, and it's good to reflect on that. It's also important for us to rejoice in the hope that because Jesus has taken our sin upon Himself, we have His holiness, His righteousness, given to us. Finally, the third Wednesday will also look at the hope of that Day, but in the perspective of the promise. This promise was fulfilled in the life of Jesus; the Day of Christ's death and resurrection, but the promise of the Day of His return in which we'll be rescued from the sadness and suffering of this life to enjoy the promise of eternal joys with Him.

In view of this Day we rejoice with the whole Church in the knowledge that Christ has been born on the first Christmas living the life we could not live in holiness and faithfulness to His Heavenly Father so that He could fulfill the promise that we would receive His holiness by faith and be prepared by Him to enjoy the pleasure of His presence on that final Day of the Lord. On that Day, He will bring with Him that Kingdom of His Father which will mean for us the release from the darkness of this world and the joy of His eternal light and righteousness.

Soli Deo Gloria!



Pastor Zickler



It's poinsettia time!

Please help us decorate the chancel for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Services.

Each plant, in gold foil perfect for gift giving, is \$17.00

The deadline to order is **Sunday, December 14th**
and sign up sheets are in the Narthex and
on the kitchen counter.

Checks or exact change are appreciated.



December Birthdays!!

Casey Brown	12/1
Vanessa Keeler	12/1
Elloise Krohe	12/3
Gerald Olszewski	12/13
Ava Schmidt	12/18
Betty Tanzer	12/18
Steve Latman	12/22
Christopher Perri	12/23
Jessica Zickler	12/27
Madelyn St. Charles	12/30
Heidi Garton	12/31

December Anniversaries!!

Vanessa & Joey Keeler 12/9/17
Lisa & John Mullarkey 12/16/1989



Keeping you in our thoughts and prayers

Jean Albert, friend of Lois Flood

Sandy Barry, friend of Pastor Zickler

Bill Bien, friend of Linda McGuire

Linda Blaneek-Novak, friend of Pat Schlueter

Kate Borland, cousin of Bill Blessman

Bill Clausen, son of Marilyn & Gary Clausen

Nancy & Kent Cloninger

Jerry Cohen, husband of Tracy Cohen

Bea Dahl

Blake Donegan, grandson of Lois & John Flood

John Donegan, friend of Lois & John Flood

Gary Domzalski, friend of Pat Schlueter

Tyna Eggert

Richard Flatley, Vietnam Veteran - WS Post

John Flood

Christine Fry, daughter-in-law of Betty & Bill Tanzer

Kate Gerlesits, friend of the Stetler Family

Arlene Gilbert, mother of Tracy Cohen

Marvin Griffin, friend of Pat Schlueter

Marilyn Haslam, friend of Lois & John Flood

Joanne Hass, mother of Glen Hass

Dale Hemminger, friend of the Claster Family

Nancy Henry, friend of Paul Sulak

Bonnie Jakubs, friend of Linda McGuire

Dan Kaiser, friend of the Claster Family

Nancy & Ron Kolar

Kooy Family, friends of Eleanor Kulaga

Kozaka Family, friends of the Stetler Family

Eleanor Kulaga & Family

Chris Lange, son of Cheryl Dore

Steve Latman

Revy Sabas Libatique, cousin of Lesley Arca-Blessman

Lim Family, friends of the Stetler Family

Allison, Rachel, Robin & Jamie, nieces of Chris & Bob Dame

Michael Martinez, step-nephew of Pastor Zickler

Bruce Mazurkiewicz, cousin of Tyna Eggert

Rod McInerney, friend of Pat Schlueter

Rich McLaughlin, friend of Marilyn & Gary Clausen

Steve Miller, friend of John Mullarkey

Lisa Mullarkey

Frank Napolitano, brother of Tony Napolitano

Tony Napolitano

Noland Family, friends of Meg Krohe

Tracy Novak, niece of Pat Schlueter

Levi Olson, cousin of Paul Sulak

Linda Parlin, sister of Carol Hassel

Mike Perkins, friend of Linda McGuire

Phyliss, friend of Pat Schlueter

Jürgen Pietzsch, cousin of Jennifer Claster

Regina Polistano, friend of Mark Rehn

Dorothea Rehn, mother of Mark Rehn

Pat Schlueter

Kristi Schmidt, sister of Lin Johnson

Kurt, Kimmey, & Adam, family of a friend of Pastor's

Soffer Family, friends of the Stetler Family

Vanessa Stetler, sister of Chris Stetler

Keelia Sulak and unborn daughter

Doris Svec

Jeff Thorne, friend of the Stetler Family

Noah(Picek)Tovar, g.granddaughter of Lois & John Flood

Athey Ulrich

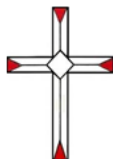
Pat Voelker, friend of Pat Schlueter

JB, John & Johnny Weiffenbach, cousins of the Schlueter & Claster Families

Pat Williams, friend of Doris Svec

Sara Wilson, friend of Chris Enright

Nancy Wolff, sister of Tyna Eggert



Please remember our shut-ins in your prayers

Eleanor Kulaga - Suzette Olszewski

**Grace Lutheran Church
Voters Meeting
November 23, 2025**

To open our meeting, Pastor lead us in prayer. The minutes of the September meeting were read with a motion made and passed to approve.

Pastor's Report: Thank you again to the anniversary committee for all their work this past year in putting together our anniversary events. Thanks also to those who planned the banquet, donated the TV and to the youth for preparing the church hall for the dinner. Everything was a success. On October 11, Pastor attended the circuit forum where Pastor Steve Anderson was elected the pastoral delegate and Pastor Zickler was elected the alternate delegate. This means that Pastor will be headed to Phoenix, AZ next July for the conference.

The egress at the parsonage has been completed and the next step will be to paint the basement and complete the bedroom. Thanksgiving Eve service is this Wednesday at 7:00 pm. Redeemer, Elmhurst is invited to attend. Lastly, if you are able, please come Saturday 11/29 at 10:00 am to help decorate the chancel Christmas trees.

Financial Secretary: Giving as of 10/31/25 was \$14,968.00. It was noted that other donations-QCD are direct contributions given through IRAs and require special bookkeeping on the Treasurer's part. The donation of \$1,000.00 was for the rental of our parking lot by a movie company. We remain under budget by (\$8,977.00).

Treasurer's Report: As of 10/31/2025, our total income was \$179,525.84 with total expenses being \$209,273.18. To pay for the deposit on the banquet, \$1,600.00 was borrowed from the Legacy Fund. The balance on hand was \$107,309.88. Receipts have not been as good as earlier in the year but we still remain under budget. In November, \$2,500.00 was moved from the Building Fund to pay for the new furnace pump and \$1,400.00 was moved from the Legacy fund to pay for the balance on the banquet. Need yet to pay are costs for the directory and miscellaneous invoices from the anniversary.

Elders: At their last meeting, they discussed the coming schedule of services: Wednesday Advent services on 12/3, 12/10, 12/17 at 7:00 pm; Christmas Eve service at 5:00 pm; Christmas Day service at 10:00 am. There will be a guest pastor on 12/28 as our Pastor will be on vacation.

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Trustees: Expenses so far this year have totaled \$8,682.69, the latest of which was for the furnace pump.

Board of Christian Education: no report

Grace Christian Academy: Their pancake breakfast is planned for January.

Evangelism: Since there has not been an active committee, there is no report, but Chris spoke to the need to revitalize evangelism in our congregation. Discussion followed on how can we challenge ourselves to reach out. We are a really blessed congregation in a unique location. Suggestions were to have a tower Christmas tree, open up our church picnic to the neighborhood, find out who the newcomers are in the area and welcome them, help at a food pantry, talk to people. Pastor and Chris will take your suggestions and ideas – big or small.

Planning Committee: no report

Budget Committee: The proposed budget for 2026 was then handed out. There were slight increases to the Elders and Trustees budgets, the rest remaining about the same as 2025. There were no questions. Voting to adopt this budget will be at our next meeting in December.

Nominating Committee: The list of nominees for officers and board members was handed out. The line item under officers – board of finance – should be eliminated and Tony Napolitano is no longer a trustee. With no other changes, additions or exceptions, the list will be voted on at our December meeting.

Old Business: MOTION: to set up a fund for the purpose of purchasing new draperies.
PASSED

New Business: Could a QR code be included in our bulletin for those who wish to contribute electronically? This issue has been researched in the past and hardly used, but could be looked into again and refreshed. Also, at our meeting, could the handouts, such as financial reports, be put up in the TV screen to save on paper?

Recently, Pastor Kim from an independent Methodist Korean church, approached Pastor about using our church for their services. After discussing this with the Elders, it was decided to get input from the congregation.

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Discussion: This church is a bible believing ethnically Korean congregation which has become independent from the Methodist church. There are approximately 80 congregants spread throughout the area. Our concerns ranged from timing of services, possible use of the parish hall, where will they store their supplies, will there be a sign out front next to ours, will they have other groups wanting to meet as well as church services, what about altar fellowship, will there be a contract with terms and conditions? On the other hand, this would be a good outreach for our congregation and might open some doors to having them “become Lutheran.”

Pastor has discussed this with district. Also there is the consideration of using our pulpit and altar area. Please note, this is NOT a voting issue for the members but is the responsibility of Pastor Zickler. However, Pastor is open to any discussion or thoughts you may have, and will not make the decision without consideration of input from the congregation.

Finally, with no other business at hand, we all joined in the Lord’s prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy Josefek, Secretary



**The proposed 2026 budget on this page and the preceding page
will be voted on at the Sunday, December 21st Voter's meeting.
If you have any questions please contact Paul Sulak.**

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH 2026 PROPOSED BUDGET To be approved at the December 21, 2025 Voter's meeting				
	2025 ACTUAL 10 MONTHS	2025 PROJECTED 12 MONTHS	2025 BUDGET	PROPOSED 2026 BUDGET
BOARD OF ELDERS				
Pastor				
Salary	65,000	78,000	78,000	85,500
Housing allowance	10,000	12,000	12,000	9,500
Substitute pastors	300	750	1,000	1,000
Pension/Disability	10,904	13,085	13,150	14,500
Medical (Welfare)	30,746	36,895	36,900	38,650
Health reimbursement	489	1,850	1,850	1,850
Conferences & convention		435	700	700
Car allowance	2,500	3,000	3,000	3,000
Reimbursed expenses			500	500
Total	119,939	146,015	147,100	155,200
Music				
Organist salary	14,167	17,000	17,000	17,500
Substitute organist	600	600	500	600
Choir music				
Total	14,767	17,600	17,500	18,100
Office				
Secretary's salary	15,085	18,102	18,100	18,700
Postage, printing, supplies	765	1,150	2,000	2,000
Total	15,850	19,252	20,100	20,700
Other				
Social security	2,324	2,788	2,800	2,900
Bulletins & worship material		100	100	100
Worship supplies and expense	1,149	1,500	1,800	1,800
Food & refreshments			200	200
Fellowship and events	645	645	500	500
Other	293	2,593	2,500	2,500
Total	4,411	7,626	7,900	8,000
Information technology				
Telephone, fax, internet	1,372	1,646	1,800	1,800
Office equipment & maintenance		1,000	1,500	1,400
Computer software	1,141	1,365	1,800	1,700
Website	40	250	600	600
Office workstation	3,785	4,540	4,500	4,500
Other			1,500	1,500
Total	6,338	8,801	11,700	11,500
TOTAL ELDERS	161,305	199,294	204,300	213,500
DISTRICT AND OTHER PAYMENTS				
District funding		4,000	4,000	4,000
Walther High School		500	500	500
Grace Christian Academy		1,000	1,000	1,000
Issues, Etc.	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Other missions	1,000	1,000	3,000	3,000
TOTAL DISTRICT PAYMENTS	2,000	7,500	9,500	9,500

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
2026 PROPOSED BUDGET

	2025 ACTUAL 10 MONTHS	2025 PROJECTED 12 MONTHS	2025 BUDGET	PROPOSED 2026 BUDGET
BOARD OF TRUSTEES				
Janitorial	7,667	9,200	9,200	9,200
Insurance	8,745	11,098	10,000	12,000
Organ, piano maintenance	689	1,278	900	1,000
Maintenance				
Parsonage	650	1,000	2,500	2,500
Church	2,944	3,400	4,000	4,000
Janitorial supplies	405	650	1,000	1,000
Grass cutting	1,640	2,115	2,200	2,200
Utilities - Church				
Electric	4,255	4,770	4,500	4,800
Gas	4,865	5,940	6,500	6,000
Scavenger	1,269	1,523	1,800	1,600
Water	1,324	1,565	1,700	1,700
Utilities - Parsonage				
Electric	1,462	1,692	1,700	1,700
Gas	776	1,076	1,300	1,300
Scavenger	387	500	600	600
Water	1,877	2,349	2,500	2,500
TOTAL TRUSTEES	38,955	48,156	50,400	52,100
BOARD OF EDUCATION				
Lessons and supplies			1,500	1,500
Holiday programs	31	150	200	200
Subscriptions	2,180	2,414	2,500	2,500
Youth programs			100	100
Adult education	120	120	100	100
Confirmation	100	100	250	250
Miscellaneous			250	250
TOTAL EDUCATION	2,431	2,784	4,900	4,900
YOUTH GROUP			1,000	1,000
EVANGELISM			500	500
TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET	204,691	257,734	269,100	280,000
CAPITAL REPLACEMENTS				
New church humidifier	1,693	1,693		
New furnace pump		2,585		
100th ANNIVERSARY - Pay from Kiel Bequ	1,680	4,500	5,000	