

Grace Lutheran Church
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Dear Saints of Grace,

For the Christmas Day Epistle lesson this year we had the following reading: But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:4-7).

Those of you who hear me talk about baptism, I'm sure have heard me speak of my great appreciation for it in view of what God promises in connection to it. This passage says it well. God saved us not because of our good works, not by "works done by us in righteousness." Instead it was of His grace, His "own mercy." And how? "By the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit." Christians, that's describing baptism. In baptism, you were washed by the Holy Spirit. In that washing you were regenerated, you were renewed. St. Paul talks about this in a different baptismal text in Romans 6. There he says, "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." There you can see how Paul describes it a bit differently. There he says that this baptism is a burial with Christ and a resurrection in His resurrection.

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These are both the same. We are buried in the old death of our sin, dying to it in baptism, raised to new life in Christ's resurrection. That is, our sin is washed from us, and we are born anew of the Holy Spirit in those waters. As St. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." You are a new in Christ. The old sinful life is dead. Do you still suffer from it? Yes. Are you still tempted by it? Yes. Do you in fact sin "much and daily" even still? Yes.

But the reality is that you are a new creation in Christ. The old is gone the new is come. The baptismal promise of cleansing and new birth is spoken to you in the assurance of its reality.

So why say this now? Because as we enter this new year, it is a good time to remember this renewal of our hearts and walk in it. We are new creatures, and the new year is a good time to recenter our focus in the newness of life. This is not easy. In fact, it's hard. In fact, we are called to die to our selves and our sinful desires daily, drowning them in those baptismal waters, not by being rebaptized daily—or ever—but instead by contrition and repentance, by sorrow for our sins and trust that we are in fact forgiven. And God promises this is true. As St. Paul says, again from Romans 6, "For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his." That is the ultimate promise of newness of life in the Christ who never lies. Thanks be to God!

Soli Deo Gloria,



Pastor Zickler

**Grace Lutheran Church
Voters Assembly
December 21, 2025**

After opening our meeting with prayer, the minutes of the November meeting were accepted as corrected. We also unanimously welcomed Kerry Mikkelsen as a new voting member. We also received a letter from NID District President, Rev. Buss, once again congratulating Grace on its 100th anniversary.

Pastor's Report: Services coming up are Christmas Eve children's service at 5:00 pm and Christmas Day at 10:00 am. Pastor will be teaching a class this coming spring semester at Concordia, Tuesdays and Thursdays in the morning. At our November meeting, we discussed whether or not to allow Rev. Kim and his church use our facilities. Since then, Pastor has talked with Rev. Kim and he and his members have decided to pursue an offer from Zion, Hinsdale.

Financial Secretary's Report: no report at this time

Treasurer's Report: no report at this time

Elders' Report: Pastor and family will be on vacation from December 27 until January 3, 2026. The Rev. Cornwall from Hope, Hillside, will be our guest speaker on December 28. Terry will be in the office during the holidays but with shortened hours.

Trustees' Report: A new vacuum cleaner was purchased for the cleaning lady. If you have any heavy duty cleaning, please use the shop vac. The tree in the front yard was trimmed thanks to Linda and Jim McGuire. It should be looked at by an arborist to check it's health for safety's sake.

Board of Christian Education: The children are practicing for the Christmas Eve service as we are meeting.

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Evangelism: As it was discussed at the November meeting, Grace needs to rejuvenate its evangelism. A committee is being assembled. Should anyone wish to be on this committee, talk to either Chris Krohe or Pastor.

Planning Committee: Next meeting is planned for January.

Old Business: The financial secretary will set up a line item for anyone wishing to donate to the drapery fund. January 25, 2026, will be the Grace Academy pancake breakfast.

New Business: Discussion moved to the proposed budget. There were no questions, additions or corrections from the floor. MOTION: to approve the 2026 budget as proposed. PASSED It was noted that this budget is a spending plan and a guide; we remain under budget at this time.

The slate of nominees for officers and board members was then presented. There were no questions, additions or corrections from the floor. MOTION: to accept the list of nominees as presented. PASSED Installation will be on January 11, 2026.

One last item, since we are now trying to use our new TV screen at meetings, please have your reports to Chris prior to the upcoming meetings so he can process them for our viewing.

With no further business at hand, we adjourned our meeting with the Lord's prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy Josefek
Secretary



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	

OFFICIAL ACTS OF THE CHURCH
FOR 2025

Baptisms

Emma Maureen Perri. Baptized 4/6/2025. Born:2/9/2025.

Confirmation –May 11, 2025

Marie Enright
Grace Lazaro

Weddings

Christopher Gorniak Jr. & Natalie Fuller – 12/6/2025

Funerals

Ken Fuller – Passed on 1/1/2025.
Jim Reid – Passed on 2/17/2025.
Irene Rohde – Passed on 3/9/2025.

New Members

By Transfer:

Mike Giacomo – 5/18/2025.
Heather Giacomo - 5/18/2025.
Timothy Schlie - 5/18/2025.
Angela Schlie - 5/18/2025.
Bev Kopplin - 9/7/2025.

By Profession of Faith:

David Villegas – 5/18/2025.
Valeria Villegas – 9/7/2025.

SCRIP



SCRIP orders are taken on Sunday,
January 11th after Service.

Questions?

Please call Sara Fitzgerald
708-822-8094

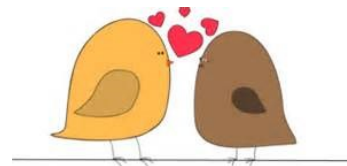
From the Women's Club

The Women's Club would like to thank everyone for participating in our Bake Sale. We will be on hiatus for two months. Hoping everyone stays warm and safe this winter; see you in March.



January Birthdays!

Connor Blessman	1/4
Glen Hass	1/13
Carol Hassel	1/13
Leah Picek	1/13
Gary Clausen	1/24
Bob Blessman	1/26
CJ Brown	1/29
Chris Dame	1/30
Carlos Lazaro	1/30
Jack Fitzgerald	1/31



January Anniversaries!

Tracy & Jerry Cohen 1/24/1987
Meaghan & Chris Krohe 1/26/2013

Do you know anyone who could use a companion to help out with light house work, shopping, taking people to appointments or just be there for company? Elzbieta, who has worked as our church cleaning person for many years, is available. She has worked in a nursing/senior care facility. It does not have to be every day, just when you need someone.

Her number is 773-704-5544.



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 Blanek-Novak, friend of Pat Schlueter
Kate Borland, cousin of Bob Blessman
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
Esther Harrison, g.mother of Christina Enright & Angie Schlie
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
Ittersagen Family, friends of the Stetler Family
Bonnie Jakubs, friend of Linda McGuire
Dan Kaiser, friend of the Claster Family
Bob & Peggy Keeler
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
Park Family, friends of the Stetler Family
Linda Parlin, sister of Carol Hassel
Mike Perkins, friend of Linda McGuire
Phylliss, friend of Pat Schlueter
Jürgen Pietzsch, cousin of Jennifer Cluster
Regina Polistano, friend of Mark Rehn
Dorothea Rehn, mother of Mark Rehn
Rickhoff Family, friends of the Stetler Family
Rolle Family, friends of the Stetler Family
Kristi Schmidt, sister of Lin Johnson
Kurt, Kimmey, & Adam, family of a friend of Pastor's
Vanessa Stetler, sister of Chris Stetler
Keelia Sulak and unborn daughter
Doris Svec
Jeff Thorne & the Thorne Family, friends 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