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Grace Notes

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Prisoners of Advent Hope



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Christmas Stewardship

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THIS MONTH AT GRACE



- December 6th
Special Voters Meeting
- December 11th
Council Meeting, 6pm
- December 15th
Christmas Decoration,
5:30pm
- December 17th
Christmas Program, 10am

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Prisoners of Advent Hope

The prophet Zechariah lived after the great Babylonian Captivity and encouraged the people of God, pointing to the Christ to come. He also gave us one of our great Advent texts about the coming Christ.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter
of Jerusalem!
Behold, your king is coming to you;
righteous and having
salvation is he, humble and
mounted on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a
donkey (Zech. 9:9).

Advent means “coming.” In these weeks of December, we are humbled by the Law with themes of repentance. “Repent! For the kingdom of God is at hand!”—the first sermon out of John the Baptizer’s mouth and that of Jesus (Matt. 3:2; 4:17). We are reminded that Christ came as a babe in Bethlehem, born as God and man to go from cradle to cross. Christ continues to come to us in His blessed Word (Rom. 10:17) and in absolution (John 20:21f.), Baptism (Gal. 3:27) and the Supper (1 Cor. 10:16–17). And Christ will come again at the resurrection. “I will come again and take you to myself” (John 14:3). Thus, Advent looks to the past, the present and to the future with hope!

Another line from Zechariah strikes me: “Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double” (Zech. 9:12). Because this world is closer to its end, this word of hope is more precious today than it was in 520



B.C. Despite this wretched world, the economic malaise, the political nonsense, the global conflict, the ubiquitous threat of Islam, the decline of the Church in the West, the shocking reality that our government now calls evil what the Bible calls good and calls good what the Bible calls evil, despite it all, I remain a “prisoner of hope.” I am chained to an ultimate, optimistic future! I am captive to the hope of Christ.

The Bible said it would be so. “The Gentiles will hope in His [Christ’s!] name” (Matt. 12:21). Christians are people of hope. Hope is rooted deep in the ancient promises of the Old Testament.

Hope fills the Psalms (e.g., Ps. 130:7; 119:49), which time and again refer us to the mighty deeds of the Lord as anchors for the steadfast truth of His promises, come what may. The New Testament explodes in

hopefulness. Through Christ, we have “access by faith into this grace,” and so “we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God” (Rom. 5:2).

Trials produce endurance, character and hope, “and hope does not put us to shame” (Rom. 5:4–5).

Yes, the whole creation creaks and cracks under the burden of sin, but it is all for a hopeful purpose (Rom. 8:8). Faith is certainty in Christ’s promises, though unseen, and thus faith is also hope, and that means hope brings patience (Rom. 8:24–25). Because we know the end of the story and its certain, resurrected life with Christ, “through the encouragement of the Scriptures, we . . . have hope” (Rom. 15:4).

Are you hopeless? Bury yourself in the Scriptures! Paul reminded the Romans that the Scriptures promised that “the root of Jesse will come . . . In him the Gentiles will hope!” (Rom. 15:12). And this blessing is as powerful

today as when Paul wrote it: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope" (Rom. 15:13).

We know that eternity is ours; we have nothing but eternal life ahead. Each of us has a vocation, a calling, and a Christian calling at that—a special purpose assigned us by God in this life to serve and love those around us.

Trials produce endurance, character and hope, "and hope does not put us to shame" (Rom. 5:4-5).

Peter gives us a mandate to speak of Christ in our vocations: "But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect" (1 Pet. 3:15). You have Christ for you, and "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).

So, don't "grieve as others do who have no hope" (1 Thess. 4:13), as you face death and trials of this life. This Advent, come what may, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful" (Heb. 10:23).

O Lord, at Thy coming, make us, keep us, find us "prisoners of hope."

Pastor Harrison
Matthew C. Harrison is president of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod



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CORRINA
GRADE

BRUCE
MARCHIANO

**SUNDAY,
JANUARY 7
10AM**

MY SON
MY SAVIOR

MARY, MOTHER OF JESUS

We'll watch this movie together
during our Educational Hour, at 10AM

Ruth Guild's Notes

Thanks to all who purchased nuts and candy. This will help our Ruth Guild Support, Lutheran Bible Translators, The Deaf

Ministry and future mission outreach goals.

Our prayer is that the Lord will bless our Ruth Guild / LWML and all of our mission goals as we (Serve The Lord With Gladness). (Psalm 100:2)

All updates and future meetings will be announced as they become available

To God Be The Glory!
Christmas Blessing and Blessings for the coming New Year.

Reporting for
Grace Ruth Guild / LWML

Sue Pritzlaff

Holidays Trees

Memory Tree

As many of you know, this year we will have our Memory Tree. During our Christmas Eve Service, on Dec. 24 (6pm), we'll take time to remember loved ones who have passed on to be with the Lord. All you have to do is pick out an ornament, and place it on the tree, located in the Narthex, at the end of the Service. This loved one can be anyone, someone who touched your life in anyway while they were here. It does not even need to be someone who passed this past year.

Mitten Tree

Also, we will have our traditional Mitten Tree. It's not only for mittens. You can add gloves, scarves, hats, earmuffs, etc. The tree will be in the Narthex from the Sunday after Thanksgiving to the Sunday before Christmas. Help those who are less fortunate than us to stay warm this winter. Thanks to all who help and bring items in.

Kenny Lovas

December

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 5.- Michelle Lenski
- 6.- Brenda Nitz
- 8.- Michael Klebar
- 8.- Jean Lechnitz
- 10.- Deanna VanAcker
- 12.- Dnison Penndragon II
- 13.- Taylor Paap
- 14.- Brendon Steinke
- 16.- Jim Toepfer
- 16.- Pastor German Novelli (Sr.)
- 22.- Ann Marie Barndt
- 23.- Susan Edgerton
- 27.- Susan Fink
- 27.- John Rom
- 29.- Cynthia Radloff

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 1.- Pastor German & Lucia
- 24.- Robert & Nancy Ryan
- 25.- Terry & Jane Donaldson
- 27.- Greg & Sharon Karasch
- 28.- Dnison & Patricia Penndragon
- 29.- Chester & Susan Zbrozek



Christmas Stewardship

Christmas is coming. It is a joyous time of feasting. The Church feasts upon the Word of God in sermon, song, and sacrament.

We hear the proclamation of the message of the angels: "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11).

We mingle our voices with theirs as we sing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased" (Luke 2:14)!

We receive the proclaimed Savior, Christ the Lord, not wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in manger, but wrapped in bread and wine placed into our mouths for the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. We feast in great joy indeed because of this great blessing from our Lord and God.

God's people in ancient Israel also feasted with great joy. The Lord showered His abundant blessing on His people. And He commanded them to feast upon it (Deut. 16). The people were to go to the place appointed, where the Lord would make His name dwell, and give offerings, each man as he was able, according to the blessing of the Lord that He had given them (Deut. 16:10, 15, 17).

And there the Lord would bless them with joy as they feasted upon what the Lord had provided. They ate of the choice parts of their offerings. They enjoyed the company of all the people of God as they together heard His promises of blessing, sang of His bountiful goodness, and partook of what He gave.

We feast on the Word who became flesh to dwell among us, not just during Christmas, but throughout all the year.

We feast not just on the salvation He has wrought for us in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, but we feast also on all the temporal blessings that God gives out of His fatherly divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in us. We enjoy the rich bounty that God provides, not only in Word and Sacrament, but also in house and home, property and income, family and friends.

Let us then, as did our brothers in the faith from ancient Israel, give as we are able, according to the blessing of the Lord our God that He has given us.

Let us, like them, give generously of the first fruits of our income, which He gives, so that all may know and enjoy the salvation He gives and the joy we have in the Savior born in the city of David, who is Christ the Lord.

From LCMS Stewardship

USHERS

DECEMBER 3rd

Chuck and Alana Zielesch,
Don and Karen Ewert

DECEMBER 6th

Jim Barndt, Mark Jubeck,
Dave Biermann, and Chester Zbrozek

DECEMBER 10th

Dave and Danny Gaus,
Sheryl Pelican, and Lori Eshelman

DECEMBER 17th (10am)

Art and Amy Socha,
Terry and Jane Doanldson

DECEMBER 24th (9am)

Sue Pritzlaff, Lynda Trapp,
Brenda Nitz, and Shirley Lovas

DECEMBER 24th (6pm)

Chuck and Alana Zielesch,
Don and Karen Ewert

DECEMBER 25th (10am)

Art and Amy Socha,
Terry and Jane Doanldson

DECEMBER 31st (10am)

Jim Barndt, Mark Jubeck,
Dave Biermann, and Chester Zbrozek

JANUARY 7th (9am)

Dave and Danny Gaus,
Sheryl Pelican, and Lori Eshelman

DECEMBER SCHEDULE



WORSHIP TIMES

Sunday | DEC. 3
 9am & 11am

Wednesday | DEC. 6
 6pm [Healing Service]

Sunday | DEC. 10
 9am & 11am

Sunday | DEC. 17
 10am [Christmas Program]

Sunday | DEC. 24
 10am [Regular Worship]
 6pm [Christmas Eve Service]

Monday | DEC. 25
 10am [Christmas Day Service]

Sunday | DEC. 31
 10am

SPECIAL EVENTS

Wednesday | DEC. 6
 7pm [Special Voters Meeting]

Thursday | DEC. 7
 11am [Grace Seniors Lunch]
 @Benny's

Friday | DEC. 15
 6pm ["Hanging on the Green"]
 Christmas Decoration (Supper @5pm)

JOIN US FOR A

Christmas

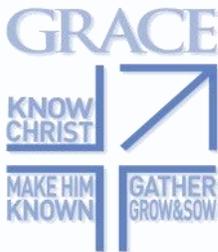
WORSHIP
 EXPERIENCE

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First Class



worship times

Let's grow together in God's Amazing Grace!

Every Sunday
9am & 11am

SUNDAY SCHOOL & ADULTS PROGRAM

10am



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Comunidad de Gracia

Celebraciones en Español
Domingos, 11 de la Mañana
Estudios Bíblicos, 10am