

Good News from Grace



DECEMBER 27, 2020 - FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. – Isaiah 61:10

What's the appropriate response to Christmas? Joy and praise, of course! This week's lessons brim with both. This Christmas season steward not only your resources but also your joy and praise for the One who changed everything.

We are never alone

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Precisely in our distress, in our dislocation, the Lord shows up. Emmanuel—God with us—makes his home in the very places we find foreign or isolating.

The room was spare and dimly lit. We sat on folding chairs in a circle—young Honduran women and some of us from the ELCA. We had come to Honduras to observe the work of AMMPARO (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities). This is the ELCA's strategy to help youth who have been forced to flee their home countries because of violence, abuse, extortion by gangs and extreme poverty. Amparo is the Spanish word for shelter or refuge.

In this case, AMMPARO partnered with the Lutheran World Federation and the Mennonites to resettle returned migrants—those who had tried to seek asylum in the United States but had failed or had been denied and deported back to Honduras.

One by one they told us their stories of fear and desperation. Not a one undertook the long and dangerous trek north on a whim. They told us about the abuse they had suffered, about

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Our Purpose

The purpose of our church is to make a difference by serving others through God's love and our faith.

In-person worship has been suspended until further notice!

Click Here to for more information regarding our services or by calling 717-737-0439

Pastor Cover will be out of the office
12/25/20 - 1/2/2021
Contact Pastor Evan (717-497-3742) directly if you need pastoral assistance! during this time!

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We hold in prayer especially this week...

Frank Blizzard, Tami Swartzell, Tom & Gloria Boyer, Bob Rayhart, Michael Smith, Margaret Knupp, Kathryn Tuckey, Micah Hoffman, Hannalyn Kiser, Patti Reed, Gerry & Sara Jane Crawford, Hope Stempo, Barry Fenicle, Ben & Marilyn Clark, Sally Snyder, Gerald & Darlene M, Ann Sheaffer, Sue Gasswint, Rick Saar, Carm Mitchell, Amber Shearer, Steven Noll, Jennifer Heverling, Garry Murray, James Silcox, Tim Butler, Vernon Frazier, Dean Jury, and Tricia Snavelly

We hold in ongoing prayer...

Mary Louise Shetter, Charlie Buchanan, Dave Buchanan, Joyce Allan, Sis Hoffman, Mary Lee Ryder, Jack Alfano, Dorothy Edquist, Barbara D, Diane Brokenshire, David Harman III, Howard Lauver, Priscilla Walter, Caroline Witmer, Paulette Lauver, Lesly Richards, Elijah Conroy, Delores Miller, Frank Blizzard, Jim Stoll, Susan Blumberg, Lisa Leen, Eileen McCann, Mary Heverling, Mike Lutz, John Eck, Destiny Glenn, and Reinhard C.

We also hold our shut-ins in prayer:

Louis Lore, John Hensch, Shirley Hughes, John Shuey, Phyllis Patterson, John Titzel, Jane Peters, Betty Bennett, Phyllis Probst, Harlow Fluevog, and Dick Cromer.

In our military:

Charles Hildebrand, Corey Latsha, Alex Robison, Larry G. Lackey and Gabriel Bailey.

***Please contact us at
717-737-0439 or
gelc@comcast.net each
month and let us know if you
wish to have someone
remain on the prayer list
(Urgent, Ongoing, Military
and Medical)***

We hold in prayer especially those in the medical fields...

Katie Perella-Carvalhoes, Lauren S., Megan S., Dixie S., Ben S., Katelynn S., Tess J., Kay L., Art L., Addison McInnes, Corky Graf, Ken Graf, Kristin Quesenberry, Maureen Minard, Brad Moore, MD, William Schell, MD, Kirsten Hyatt, MS, Star Peiffer, Patty Rohde, Melanie Augustine, Jenny Castillo, Jill Green, Mary Brown, Kara, Sheri Hartzell, Tracy Hartzell, Josh Barr, Chrystal, Sante, Cindy Frost, Eileen Smith, Sharon Eppley, Kayleigh Titzel, Brendan Bergey, Judith Zeiders, Amy Evans, Laurie Colman, Connie Malmberg, Ashley Morris, Amy Schwab, Beth Gargiulo, Tami Heath, Julie Draper, Deb Fickes, Amanda McNally, Justin Young, Jessica Chestnut, Stephanie Sampson, Samantha & Peter Kang, David Bergquist, MD, Karen Redclift Albidrez, Elizabeth Brickell, and Maura White



HISTORY CORNER

By Don Barlup

CHRISTMAS MEMORIES AT GRACE

Growing up at Grace brings back many fond memories. Perhaps the most memorable are experiences surrounding the Christmas holidays.

I remember that each Sunday school class decorated their own tree. The younger the class, the more interesting the tree. Handmade decorations from colored paper, flour paste, glitter, and Styrofoam were fashioned and gingerly (yeah right!) placed on the tree.

The youth group usually decorated the large tree in the Social Hall as well as the upstairs and downstairs hallways. After New Year's, the Chelsea Road side entrance was filled with well used and rather scraggly needless remnants of once beautiful Christmas trees.

Every year around Thanksgiving, the Sunday school classes would start

practicing to put together a Christmas Family night program. It may have been a play, which usually the Junior and Senior high school students would participate in. The Elementary school students would usually sing Christmas carols or participate in the living crèche. These holiday happenings were usually orchestrated by Ruth Berry, with help from her family and other ladies of the congregation. We always had a turkey dinner with all the trimmings and sang Christmas carols after the program and dinner.

If you have been a member for years, you will remember this Christmas Eve tradition at Grace. Three or four of our brass musicians would climb the ladder to the steeple walk and play Christmas carols during our arrival for services, very moving for us and very somewhat dangerous and cold for them.

One tradition that still remains is the matching trees on each side of the Altar. Traditions come and go, but I hope and pray that this one remains forever a part of Christmas at Grace.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL FISCAL MEETING

Council has set the date of our annual meeting in January for Sunday, January 24 at 11:30am. This meeting will likely be over zoom and our constitution allows for electronic communication at meetings. In January, we will send you the log-in information for the meeting along with a proposed agenda. Our expected items include: reviewing the annual financial reports, setting a 2021 budget, and electing Council members (especially those appointed since the last congregational meeting). We know that zoom may not be a favorite option for everyone. In January we will share a few ways to help you if you need assistance in order to be part of the meeting.

GRACE YOUR CLOSET

Is in need of children's clothing from baby to age ten for boys & girls as well as men's clothing. Winter boots, shoes and sneakers in any size would be great, too. Men's winter coats would be appreciated, but we do not need kids' and women's coats. Contact Jen Graf (717-805-2740) or Garri Ann Hearn (717-856-2760) to arrange a time to drop off items.

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family members who had been killed by gangs, about the inability to make a living because of the extortion by organized crime. They talked about the bitter sadness of leaving home and family, and the uncertainty of the future.

I remember one young woman in particular. She was pregnant when she tried to migrate to the United States. She had the baby somewhere along the way. She was far from home, mostly alone and desperately wanted her mother to be with her. None of this is what she had hoped for when she was growing up. Circumstances beyond her control had forced her into this new and strange existence. She and her baby were now back in Honduras—but not at home. Home was too dangerous.

Remember last Christmas? Remember all of the preparations, the travel to be with family? Remember the holy beauty of the Christmas Eve liturgy and receiving Christ's grace and forgiveness at his table? The shopping and Christmas caroling? The in-

person gatherings? All that has changed. The pandemic hasn't forced us from our homes but into our homes, sheltering in place, isolated. Not together, but physically distanced. Not gathered with family and friends, but forced apart because of the threat of infection. Forced by circumstances beyond our control into this strange existence. Oh, there will be Christmas carols piped into grocery stores and other essential services, but they will be painful reminders of how life used to be.

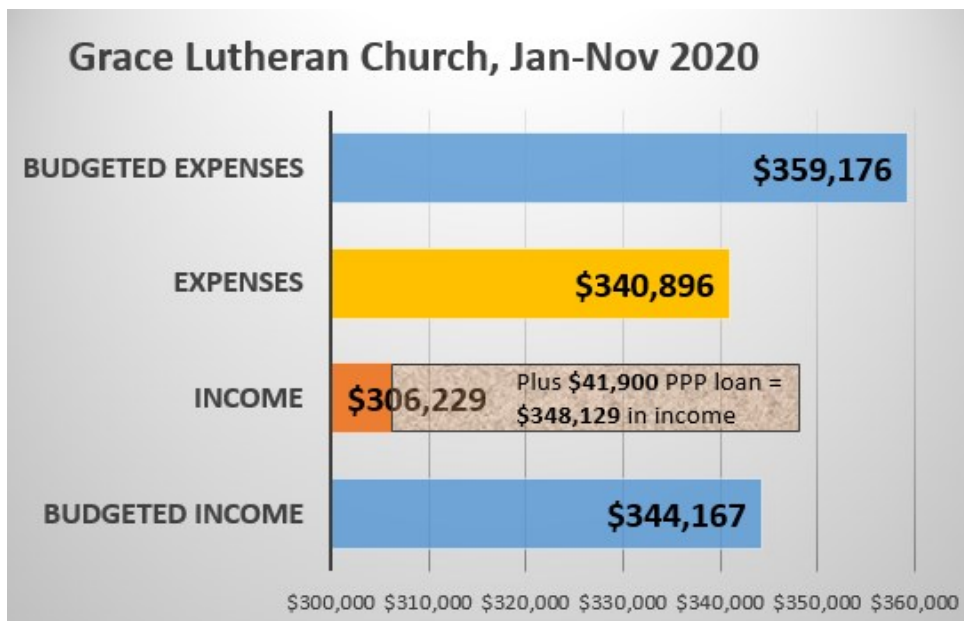
We are reminded of the experience of the exiles in Babylon: "By the rivers of Babylon—there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered Zion. On the willows there we hung up our harps. For there our captives asked us for songs, and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion!' How could we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land" (Psalm 137)?

I told the young Honduran woman about another young woman who was forced to leave home because of a government decree. She, too, was

pregnant and made a long and difficult journey. She, too, was far from home and without her mother when the baby came. She had to find shelter wherever she could. This wasn't what she had hoped for when she was growing up. Circumstances beyond her control had forced her into this new existence. That young woman was Mary and the child was Jesus. Precisely in our distress, in our dislocation, the Lord shows up. Emmanuel—God with us—makes his home in the very places we find foreign or isolating. The young Honduran woman, and all of us, can find hope because of the birth of Mary's child. There is no God-forsaken place and we are never alone—not in hospital rooms, or sheltering in place, or Zoom calls or on dangerous roads.

Many of us will not be physically home for Christmas, but we are truly home in Christ.

As seen in the December 2020 issue of Living Lutheran



Members of Grace,

You'll notice on this month's Income-Expense chart that the orange Income bar looks strange...I added a variation to show how much of our income is from giving receipts and other usual sources, versus how much is from the federal PPP loan, which was forgiven and Grace will not have to pay back in the future. This loan was quite a blessing and has helped us stay ahead of the game in 2020. As always, your contributions are the main source of income keeping our church and all our missions alive, so thank you for your generosity.

A Merry Christmas to Everyone!

Susan Dickinson
Treasurer

PROPERTY & MAINTENANCE FUND CLARITY

There has been confusion over the years concerning the "property & maintenance" line on your envelopes. To clear confusion, in the new year, all gifts designated "property & maintenance" will be applied first to property & maintenance items paid out of our budget — such as regular repairs, contract to keep our elevator running, snow removal, new windows etc. When that obligation is met, we will apply your gifts to a "reserve fund" held for larger property projects, such as if the boiler would break. *Should you wish your gift to go directly to the reserve property fund please indicate that on your envelope or check as "reserve property fund".* Please contact the office if you have any questions.

THIS WEEK AT GRACE

The Altar Flowers for **Sunday, December 27** are given by Ann & Larry Hoffman in memory of Ann's parents, Betty & Jack Rumberger.

The Bulletin & Mailing Sponsorship for **Sunday, December 27** are given by Nancy Whitcomb in honor of the pastors.

The Sanctuary Lamp Sponsorship for **December** is given by Bob Hillegas in loving memory of wife, Carol.

SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE

To see what dates are available for Lamp Sponsorship, Altar Flower Sponsorship, and Bulletin & Mailing Sponsorship for 2021 go to <https://www.gracecamphill.org/sponsorships>. Contact Diane at 717-737-0439 x 15 or deppengelc@gmail.com to reserve a date.

**The Church Office will be closed on
Thursday, December 24 & Monday, December 28**
**Pastor Cover will be out of the office from
December 25, 2021 - January 2, 2021**
**Contact Pastor Evan during this time if you need
pastoral assistance**

TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY

1:00pm & 7:00pm via Zoom

Tuesday, Dec. 29
NO BIBLE STUDY

CAREGIVER & GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

The next meeting will be on **Tuesday, January 11 at 11:00a.m** via zoom. Questions? Contact Pastor Cover.

Special Music this Week

"Silent Night and The Wexford Carol"

Thomas Keesecker

Carolyn Houck

"Rise Up Shepherds"

Thomas Keesecker

Carolyn Houck

BOOK CLUB

The next book will be "Learning to Walk in the Dark" by Barbara Brown Taylor. Barbara Brown Taylor is the author of thirteen books, including the *New York Times* bestseller *An Altar in the World* and *Leaving Church*, which received an Author of the Year award from the Georgia Writers Association. Taylor is the Butman Professor of Religion at Piedmont College, where she has taught since 1998. She lives on a working farm in rural northeast Georgia with her husband, Ed.

"Learning to Walk in the Dark" follows Barbara Brown Taylor on her journey to

understand darkness, which takes her spelunking in unlit caves, learning to eat and cross the street as a blind person, discovering how "dark emotions" are prevented from seeing light from a psychiatrist, and rereading scripture to see all the times God shows up at night. With her characteristic charm and wisdom, Taylor is our guide through a spirituality of the nighttime, teaching us how to find God even in darkness, and giving us a way to let darkness teach us what we need to know.

Join us on **Tuesday, January 19, 2021** via zoom. Contact Pastor Cover for log-in information.

Good News from Grace articles are due by **12:00pm on Tuesdays**. Email to gelc@comcast.net

Join us for Worship!

Sundays at 9:30 AM
via Live Stream

Sunday School

Sundays September to May
CLICK HERE for Sunday School at Home videos.



Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

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