



January

2024 GLC Newsletter

Grace Lutheran Church

301 Forest Ave. E.
Mora, MN 55051
320.679.1062

Office Open-
Monday - Thursday 8-4
(Main handicap doors
unlocked)
Friday Office Closed

CONTACT US:
Pastor Gary Guptill:
Gguptill@aol.com

218.393.9234

Leah's Church Office Email:
moragrancelutheran@gmail.com

Krista's Email:
kristagrancelutheran@gmail.com

Kelly's Email:
Kellykehr01@gmail.com

Happy
New
Year!

Grace Lutheran Church

Sunday Worship

8:00 a.m. Sanctuary Worship

9:15 a.m. Sunday School

9:30 a.m. FLC Service

10:15 a.m. NICE 95.5 F.M. KBK

****Worship area subject to change**

GLC Website:

www.gracechurchmora.com

Facebook: @moragrancelutheran

Grace Google Calendar:

<https://calendar.google.com/calendar/u/0/r?tab=mc>

ELCA website: www.elca.org

NE MN website:

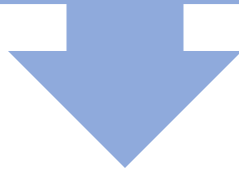
www.nemnsynod.org



Pursuing a life of mercy in the new year.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
	New Year's Day 8am - Office Closed	8am - Office Closed	8am - Office Open 9:30am - Quilters & Prayer Shawl 12pm - Pastor's Bible Study 7:15pm - Pastor's Bible Study	8am - Office Open	Office Closed	Epiphany of Our Lord
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Epiphany of Our Lord Prayer Communion Sunday 8am - Sanctuary Worship 9:15am - Sunday School 9:30am - FLC Service 10:30am - Church Council 2pm - St. Clare's Worship	8am - Office Open 10am - Staff Check In 3:15pm - Celebration Singers 4pm - Soup for the Soul @ Emmanuel 6pm - AI Anon	8am - Office Open	8am - Office Open 8am - Release Time 9:30am - Quilters & Prayer Shawl 12pm - Pastor's Bible Study 6pm - Confirmation Meal 6:30pm - Confirmation 7:15pm - Pastor's Bible Study	8am - Office Open 9:30am - Eve Circle	Office Closed	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
ROSY OFFERING - World Mission 8am - Sanctuary Worship 9:15am - Sunday School 9:30am - FLC Service	Martin Luther King Jr. Day 8am - Office Closed 4pm - Soup for the Soul @ Emmanuel	8am - Office Open 10am - Staff Check In	8am - Office Open 9:30am - Quilters & Prayer Shawl 12pm - Pastor's Bible Study 6pm - Confirmation Meal 6:30pm - Confirmation 7:15pm - Pastor's Bible Study	8am - Office Open	Office Closed	12pm - Newsletter Deadline
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Prayer Communion Sunday 9:15am - Sunday School 9:30am - FLC Service 10:30am - Annual Meeting	8am - Office Open 10am - Staff Check In 4pm - Soup for the Soul @ Emmanuel 6pm - AI Anon	8am - Office Open	8am - Office Open 9:30am - Quilters & Prayer Shawl 12pm - Pastor's Bible Study 6pm - Confirmation Meal 6:30pm - Confirmation 7:15pm - Pastor's Bible Study	8am - Office Open	Office Closed	
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
8am - Sanctuary Worship 9:15am - Sunday School 9:30am - FLC Service	8am - Office Open 10am - Staff Check In 3:15pm - Celebration Singers 4pm - Soup for the Soul @ Emmanuel 6pm - AI Anon	8am - Office Open	8am - Office Open 9:30am - Quilters & Prayer Shawl 12pm - Pastor's Bible Study 6pm - Confirmation Meal 6:30pm - Confirmation 7:15pm - Pastor's Bible Study			

PASTOR'S PAGE



The meaning of this church season of Epiphany

January gifts us with the season of Epiphany. To have an epiphany is to have our hearts and minds opened to a new way of seeing the world. In many ways, this is contrary to the way the human hearts wants to work. Seeing with new eyes, looking at life in a new way is currently belittled in our culture. The term which is floating around is “Woke.” It is perceived to be wrong to have an epiphany. What once was is good enough, we have the temptation to say. The church season of Epiphany has a different approach to life. Epiphany is about the beauty of light which reveals the disappointment of darkness. It works to turn hate into life. The entire earthly ministry of Jesus is to wake up senses and to see life as a gift. It is to teach us that love is always stronger and better than hate. Love brings healing. Love is the meaning of life. How can you come alive this season of Epiphany and let the light of Christ shine on the darkness of this world?

It is a season to celebrate.

See you in church,
Pastor Gary

january

Birthdays 2024 GLC



2. Kathy Menze
3. Kelly Linder, Adam Herwig, Aubry Brasch
4. John Skillicorn, Judy Morgenweck
5. Ray Fore, Stratton Nelson
7. Kathy Hallauer
8. Elaine VanDriel, Don Semelhack, Josie Brasch
9. Karl Deis, Landon McGrew
10. Laura Larson
11. Robert Jobe, David Backlund
12. Jason Donaghue, Mackenzie Belsheim
13. Jessica Olen
14. Anna Kehr
15. Lynette Skolte
16. Max Sampson, Paul Olson
18. Bev Deis, Landon Donaghue
19. Eric Marohn, Kyle Wicklund, Nicole Pancake
20. Barb Herwig
21. Heidi Johnson
22. Ashley Thompson
23. Thomas Mulford
24. Simon Larse
n
28. Todd Sjoberg, Reed Olson
29. MaryEtta Schwartz, Barb Sjoberg,
Julie Mulford, Joe Sampson

If your birthday is not listed, please contact the church office at 320.679.1062 or email moragrancelutheran@gmail.com with your correct information. We don't want to forget anyone!

Worship Schedule

January and February 2024

8:00 Service

Jan 7th:

Ushers: Dan Funk & Gerald Funk

Lector: Jan Falk

Communion: Jan Falk

Jan 14th:

Ushers: Greg & Jane Myers

Lector: Greg Myers

Jan 21st: No Service

Ushers:

Lector:

Communion:

Jan 28th:

Ushers: Gene & Eunice Weckwerth

Lector: Gene Weckwerth

Feb 4th:

Ushers: John & Lynn Paulson

Lector: Lynn Paulson

Communion: Dale Hawkins

Feb 11th:

Ushers: Guy & Peggy Groshek

Lector: Peggy Groshek

Feb 18th:

Ushers: Roger Peterson & Dale Hawkins

Lector: Deb Schultz

Communion: Andrea Hams

Feb 25th:

Ushers: Keith & Sheila Rogne

Lector: Laura Strand

9:30 Service

Jan 7th:

Ushers: Mark & Verona Gravich

Lector: Mark Gravich

Communion: Robyn Wallace

Jan 14th:

Ushers: Suzie Halverson & Dianne Fisher

Lector: Steve Denzine

Jan 21st: Annual Meeting

Ushers: Brent & Amy Nelson

Lector: Brent Nelson

Communion: Krista Elvehjem

Jan 28th:

Ushers: Craig & Jodi Schultz

Lector: Craig Schultz

Feb 4th:

Ushers: Harry & Robin Blegen

Lector: Harry Blegen

Communion: Linda Johnson

Feb 11th:

Ushers: Ray & Diane Knutson

Lector: Jeremy Schultz

Feb 18th:

Ushers: Don & Mary Olson

Lector: Judy Roeschlein

Communion: Judy Roeschlein

Feb 25th:

Ushers: Art & Luette Kottke

Lector: Sue Oehrlein



Mission Statement:

The Grace Lutheran Library Mission will support all the members of Grace using the library resources to help them interpret what they read, see, and experience within the context of the Christian Gospel.

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.” -John 1:14

Check Out the Church Library!

Section 1: Fiction. These books are found in the tall books shelves and are in alphabetical order by author.

Section 2 through Section 9: Non-fiction. These books are found on the shelves under the window nearest the couch & chairs. The categories here include Biography, Reference, Faith, Family Living, Death & Dying, Self-Fulfillment, Wellness, and Social Issues. The library team does their best to put a book into the right category. Sometimes a book can fall under more than one area.

Children’s Books: These books are labeled with A through E and range from pre-school through early teen. These books are found under the window and along the wall near the little table & chairs.

Devotional Books can be found on the spinning rack in the center Y shaped shelf. The devotional books can be taken home or read in the library and do not need to be checked out. Please feel free to donate any devotional books that you are finished with and are willing to share. Just place the book on the spinning rack for others to use.

There are also other books, videos, cassettes, etc. which can be found on the Y shelf and under the bulletin board.

To check out a book from the library please sign your name and date on the library card in the back of the book and place the card in the small brown wooden box on the shelf under the window. When returning the book to the library, just place it in the basket under the window and near the door. There is no due date, but we do request that books be returned when finished so that they will be available for others to read.

Newer books, seasonal books, books with a timely topic or other books of interest are placed on top of the books shelves to be easily and readily available for checking out.

We invite everyone to check out the library and check out some books!!

Come in and explore the church library - Lots of good reading awaits.

Living Grace Library is open whenever the church is open. Come in anytime.

Please remember to return your finished books. The book you may have forgotten to return may be just the book someone else is patiently waiting to read. Thank you.

TITHING

In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, *“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”*

Acts 20:35



Thank you kindly, for your continued generosity to GLC. Your offering helps our ministries grow.

Happy New Year to all.

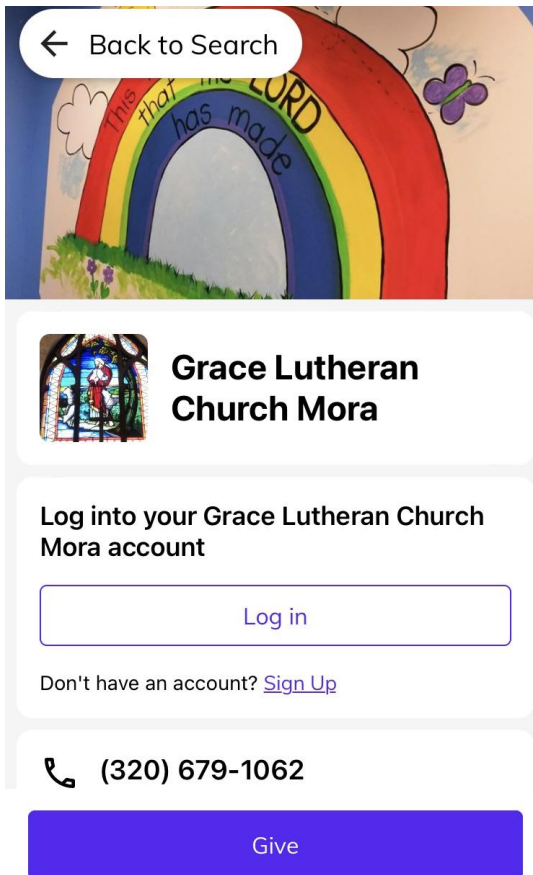
WAYS TO GIVE AT GRACE

VANCO MOBILE FAITH ENGAGEMENT APP OPTION:

If you would like to have the app right on your phone for easy use please follow these steps under your app store on your phone:

1. Search Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement
2. Download app onto phone
3. Open the app.
4. Set up an account or sign in if you already have an account
5. The first time you use it, you'll need to **search Grace Lutheran Church Mora**. It should show our Icon (stained glass window) and address. Choose as your church. You should only need to do this once.
6. Click GIVE
7. Click the down arrow to see the options
8. Choose whatever you would like to give to.
9. Enter amount, select frequency, type in the designation (what it's for) and click Give now
10. Review the summary and submit
11. You will receive an email receipt of your payment

**Thank you for your continued support of Grace Lutheran Church and our ministries!
We are the church together; and together we are strong and faithful!**



APP ICON for:
Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement



When you search **Grace Lutheran Church Mora**, this is what you should see on the Vanco Mobile Faith App.



Offering envelopes are available to use as well, at both usher podiums.

SCAN to DONATE VANCO ONLINE GIVING



You may also put offering
in offering plate or mail to:

301 Forest Ave. E. Mora,
MN 55051

30-November -23 General Checkbook:

General Checkbook:

Beginning balance	(3,646.76)
Deposits *	33,051.83
Checks written *	(36,884.80)
Ending balance	(7,479.73)

* includes amount to and **FROM** savings



Contributions can be debited automatically from your checking or savings account or processed using your credit or debit card. Our electronic giving program offers convenience for you and much-needed donation consistency for our congregation. You can set up your donations on our website, www.gracechurchmora.com or scan the QR code above with a downloadable free QRC Scanner app on your electronic device and follow the onscreen instructions.

To set up your electronic donation on our website:

- 1) Go to www.gracechurchmora.com
- 2) Click on the More tab, then click the Give tab, then scroll down to click on Give online, once you click Give online, it brings you to Vanco a Secure Site.
- 3) Follow the onscreen instructions to schedule your one time or recurring contribution.

Thank you, kindly, for all the ways you give to Grace.

Grace Lutheran Church

2023 Council Minutes

12-17-2023 Meeting Minutes

2023 COUNCIL MEMBERS

President: Sarah Hanson

Vice President: Ethan Elvehjem

Secretary: Robin Blegen

Treasurer: Kristin Nelson

Lacey Danelski, Andrea Hams, Linda Johnson,
John Paulson, Mary Olson and Craig Schultz

Thank you, for serving on council.

Called to order 10:07 A.M. by: Sarah

- Council Sharing:

Opening

Roll Call

- Members present: Sarah, Robin, Andrea, John, Craig, Ethan, Lacey, Pastor Gary
- Members absent: Linda, Mary
- Devotions by: Sarah --Jan. 7, 2024 Devotions: John

Open Forum

Agenda- Approval—Ethan / Craig m/s/c

Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Minutes approved Andrea / Craig m/s/c

Ministry Reports

- **Senior Pastor Report**
- **Children, Youth and Family**
- **Worship and Music**
 - **Christmas Eve**
 - 9:00 A.M. Sanctuary Service – 4th Sunday of Advent No Communion
 - 4:00 P.M. Candlelight service in FLC w/Brass and H.C. / 2 stations
 - 7:00 P.M. NICE 95.5 F.M. radio
 - 10:00 P.M. Candlelight service in the Sanctuary w/ Holy Communion
 - **New Year Eve**
 - 9:00 A.M. Sanctuary Service, No Communion
 - **Nursing Home Services** Jan. 7th, 2024

Treasurer's Report

- Nov. 30, 2023 (7,479.73) Nov. had Insurance payment
- January 7th, 2024, the Council will finalize 2024 Budget.

Unfinished Business

- Tech Area in FLC
- Solar Panel

New Business

- Annual Meeting: One service 9:30 A.M. January 21, 2024
- Proposed Grace Evangelical Lutheran Constitution (Nov.2023)
motion by: Ethan / John m/s/c
- Email sent on Dec. 14, 2023 to church congregation with proposed:
 - Grace Evangelical Lutheran Constitution.
 - The congregation will vote at Annual meeting.
- Meal following the Annual meeting. Serving soup, crackers, rolls.

Next meeting, Sunday, January 7, 2024 10:00 A.M.

Motion to adjourn Andrea / Lacey m/s/c

Closed with the Lord's Prayer **Submitted by Robin Blegen, Council Secretary**



**Grace Lutheran Church
Congregational Annual Meeting**

**Save the Date!
Sunday
January 21st,
2024**

Grace
Lutheran
Church
2023 Annual
Congregational
Meeting
Sunday,
January 21st,
2024

2022 Congregational Meeting Minutes~ Call to Order: 10:42am by Laura Strand, Council Chair

Certification of Quorum by Laura Strand, Council President, with 66 members signed in

Agenda- Approval as written
-- Todd Sjoberg / Sarah Hanson m/s/c

Old Business:
-- None

New Business:
--None

Discussion:
1. Congregation attending 8 am & 9:30 am service getting to know each other
2. Questions about how Sunday School work would

Nominating Committee:
-- Committee members; Dan Funk, Betty Smith and Nick Schroeder
-- 3 council positions open and 3 candidates
 Andrea Hams, Mary Olson and John Paulson
-- Motion to approve white ballot for council members
 Roger Peterson / Deb Schultz m/s/c
-- Committee for 2023; Laura Strand, Jessica Thomson and Josh Madson

Synod Assembly 2023
-- We have no candidates for May 2023 Synod Assembly Gathering

Presentation of 2022 Financial Statement:
-- Finished year with + 943.44

Presentation of 2023 Budget:
-- Increased staff salaries to Synod guidelines per Personnel and Finance recommendations
-- Add to salaries: Health Insurance benefit \$200 full time employee / \$100 part time employee
-- Motion to accept the 2023 Financial Statement
 Gene Weckwerth / Verona Gravich m/s/c

Recessed Annual Meeting for: Foundation Meeting
-- Motion to approve Foundation Minutes Mary Olson / Todd Sjoberg m/s/c

Date and Time for next year Meeting:
-- Sunday, January 21st, 2024

**** Approval of proposed GLC Constitution-
all information is attached in email with GOL.**

Motion to Adjourn Roger Peterson / Greg Myers
Benediction by: Pastor Gary Guptill

**One Service
9:30 A.M.
Lunch to
follow!**

WEEKLY, MONTHLY, AND HERE AND THERE ACTIVITIES!



Sowing Grace
Quilters

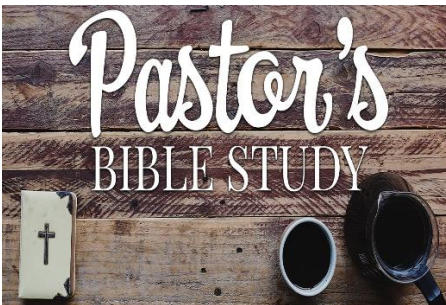
SOWING GRACE QUILTERS

Quilters meet every Wednesday from 9:30 A.M. to Noon in the West Narthex.

All are welcome, we come together each week with open hearts and willing hands to serve our Lord.

PROPERTY

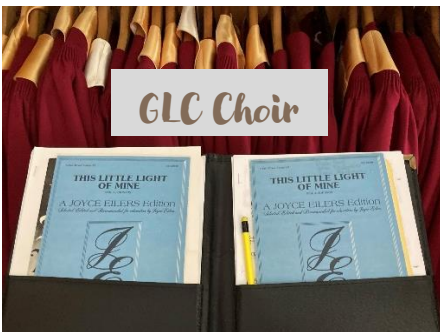
Property meets the 1st Tuesday of the month at 7:00 P.M. Main Narthex



Pastor's
BIBLE STUDY

WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY

A study of Isaiah is on Wednesdays, at either noon in the FLC and/or 7:15 in the library. All are welcomed. This class will study the chapters 40 - 55, known as Second Isaiah. This covers the time in Israel's history while in Babylonian Captivity about to return back to Jerusalem. It is a celebration of the forgiveness of God for an entire nation. Come and learn.



GLC Choir

GLC CHOIR

Wednesdays 6:00 P.M.
GLC Choir Room
All are welcome!

Fun, Fellowship,
Friends

EVE CIRCLE

Eve Circle meets the 2nd Thursday at 9:30 A.M. in the West Narthex.

We would love to have you join us!



EVE Circle



Card Makers

CARD MAKERS

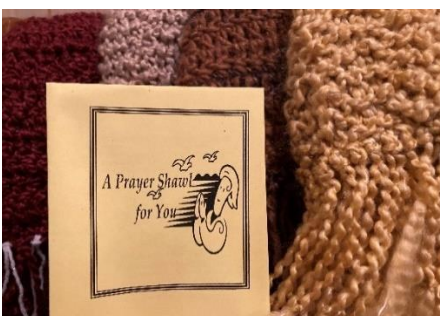
Card makers meet the last Tuesday of the month at 1:00 P.M. in the West Narthex.

Card Makers are on hold until March 26th, 2024!

NEWSLETTER

GLC newsletter deadline is the 20th of every month.

February newsletter information is due January 20th @ noon.



PRAYER SHAWL

Prayer shawl ministry meets every Wednesday of the month at 9:30 A.M. w/ quilters.

All are welcome!

WORSHIP AND MUSIC

Worship and Music meets the first Monday of the month at 11:00 A.M. *Date subject to change.





The Mora Food Pantry

214 Railroad Ave- Mora (North entrance)
679.5513 morafoodpantry@gmail.com

Open:
Tuesday's and Friday's 9:30 A.M.- Noon
1st Tuesday of the month 5-6 P.M.

RADIO SPONSORSHIP

Would you like to sponsor a Sunday Morning Church Service on NICE 95.5 F.M. KBEK at 10:15 A.M. on Sunday's?

If so, please send a check for **\$150.00** to GLC
301 Forest Ave. E. Mora, MN 55051

Please include any special occasion you would like to celebrate (birthday, graduation, wedding or anniversary) or a special someone you would like to honor.



Altar Flowers

ALTAR FLOWERS

If you would like to sign up for Flowers on the Altar, **please sign-up** on the **sheet** in the Main Narthex.

It is always such a nice touch to the service when there are flowers on the Altar.

Thank you, to those who sign up!



NOISY OFFERING SUNDAY

*Sunday, January 14th –
bring your change!*

WORLD MISSION

Grace Lutheran's Sunday School World Missions Project

Lutheran World Relief School Kits

Every Year the Sunday School kids lead the congregation in a World Missions Project during the month of January. This year's project is **Lutheran World Relief School Kits for Kids!**

Education is one of the strongest tools that a community has for breaking the cycle of hunger and poverty. Education leads to a better life for children, their families and their communities. School kits contain essential supplies to help children learn in the face of many obstacles. Often, School kits provide normalcy in times of crisis.

The Sunday School kids will be setting up a booth in the Narthex of the church starting January 14th to display their artwork and projects. The congregation is invited to donate kit items (see detailed list below and photos) or money to help purchase items. Each person making a contribution will receive a pencil bag specially created by the students as a token of their appreciation.

A Thrivent Action Team grant along with your financial and supply contributions will make this project possible! Money collected will help purchase drawstring backpacks, additional kits supplies as needed and cover some of the cost of shipping to where the kits are most needed.

January 7th – Project Kick off! Introduce to kids and congregation. Kids will start working on their projects

January 14th – Booth will be up and ready for your donations! Kids will continue to make projects and collect money at home.

January 21st and 29th – Collection continues!

February 4th – Kids will pack the school kits during Sunday School

February 10th – Blessing and Prayer for the School Kits before they are delivered to LWR in St. Paul.

With your help our Sunday School kids can put school kits in the hands of children who need them to further their education and help break the cycle of hunger and poverty.

Items that we will be collecting: (photos on back of this page)

Please note: It is very important that the items donated are exactly as described. Thank you

1 subject note books – 70 pages wide ruled

Box of 24 crayons

Pencil sharpener

Wooden ruler with centimeters on one side and inches on the other

Blunt scissors (cannot have sharp pointed tips)

No. 2 pencils

Black or blue ball point pens (no gel pens)

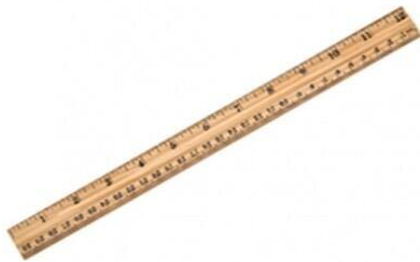
2 1/2 " erasers

**Grace Lutheran's Sunday School World Missions Project
Lutheran World Relief School Kits items to be collected!**

The Sunday School Kids are hoping to fill 75 bags!



sheet notebooks w/70 pages
/ box of 24 crayons



pencil sharpener
/ ruler



blunt (round) scissors, No.2 pencils,
ball point pens, 2 1/2" erasers

Children, Youth and Family Ministry

Check out CYF Ministry on FACEBOOK! Grace Lutheran Children Youth and Family (private group)
or on-line: www.gracechurchmora.com

Sunday School at Grace

Regular Sunday School will resume on January 7th.

Sunday School starts at 9:15 on Sundays. This gives parents a chance to get their kids downstairs and get themselves settled for worship, which starts at 9:30 in the Family Life Center.



After the sermon, the kids all come up front for the “Sunday School Sit Down” where the adults get to hear what we’ve been up to and maybe learn a little something too! Families stay in worship together for the remainder of the service.

We invite families who prefer to have their children with them for the whole service to attend our 8am Worship Service in the Sanctuary and then come for Sunday School after.



Celebration Singers - Mondays after school 3:15-4:15 with pick up until 5. Carpooling from school is available if needed. Please contact Kelly if your child(ren) would like to join us! January Practice dates: January 8th and 29th. (No school on the 15th and 22nd) Our next performance date is February 10th.

The next Religious Release Time is January 10th! Please note that this is different from what is in the school calendar.

Once a month on a Wednesday, we welcome the 1st -6th graders to come for a morning of fun and learning. You **MUST** complete and turn in the registration form indicating Release Time participation so that the school can be informed. Drop off from 7am-8am. Activities start at 8, kids are bussed back to school at 10:45. Kids can join us any time as long as they have a registration form with Release Time checked on it.



Elementary CHILL Retreat at Camp Onomia is January 26-28 for Grades 3rd – 6th. If we get a group of at least 7 kids, Kelly can go with for free! This is a great way for kids to be introduced to camp with a trusted adult along. Registration information will be on the CYF table on Jan. 7th. You must let Kelly know by the 14th if your child(ren) want to go.

Confirmation – Regular Wednesday night confirmation will start up again January 10th.

Save the Date!! The Middle School Blast at Camp Onomia is February 23rd-25th! Jr. High youth will get more info about this during Confirmation.



The Synod Journey to the ELCA National Youth Gathering is in NEW ORLEANS July 14th-21st 2024!!

The ELCA National Youth Gathering happens every three years and is an incredible opportunity for young people to experience the love of Christ through service, worship, interactive learning, and fellowship with thousands of other youth from across the country. They are exposed to people, cultures and stories that can expand their understanding of Jesus' call to love our neighbor and be truly life changing! We are teaming up with youth and adults from Calvary and Immanuel Brunswick for an awesome group of 25 youth and adults. **Our group from Grace is: Adult Leaders: Kelly Kehr and Cristy Thomas. Youth: Kendall Brandt, Abby Donaghue, Isaac Holland, Caden Johnson, Grace Johnson, Ledgyn Nelson.**

Thank you for all your support for our journey so far! Please continue to keep the group in your prayers.

Message from Kelly

I will be attending the ELCA's Youth Leaders Network "Extravaganza" (training conference) in New Orleans January 15th-21st. The first part of the week I will be engaged with the FORMATION CO-OP where I have been serving as guide for 2 other ELCA churches. The second half I will be attending workshops and large group sessions. If you would like to know more about the conference and/or the Formation Co-op, please ask me and I'd be happy to tell you all about it!



Grace Lutheran's Children Youth and Family Ministry is a Christ centered program with the purpose of building disciples for Jesus by supporting and partnering with parents in fulfilling their baptismal promises. By God's Grace we seek to provide meaningful faith formation experiences for all ages. For more information regarding Children, Youth and Family Ministry please contact Kelly Kehr (320-336-8028) or kellykehr01@gmail.com

Saturday, January 6th, 2024 The Epiphany of Our Lord

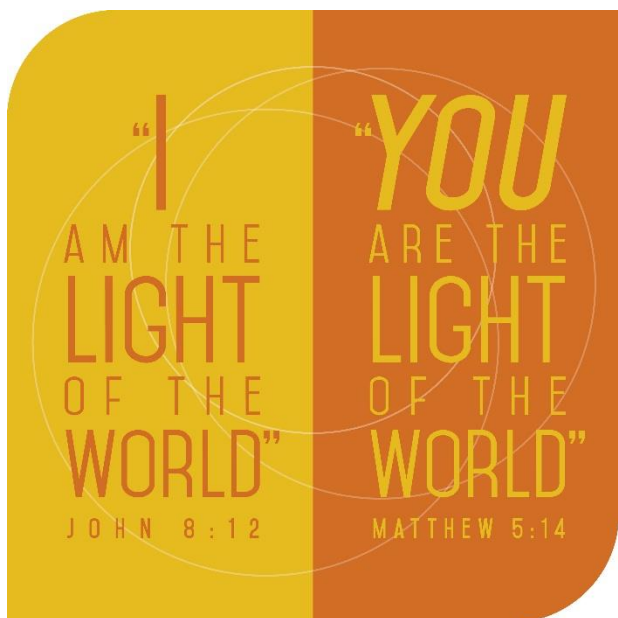
The feast of Epiphany (“manifestation”) concludes the Christmas season with a celebration of God’s glory revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. In Isaiah and Ephesians, that glory is proclaimed for all nations and people. Like the light of the star that guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ reveals who we are: **children of God who are claimed and washed in the waters of baptism. We are sent out to be beacons of the light of Christ, sharing the good news of God’s love to all people.**

Treasured by God

A newborn baby often elicits “oohs” and “ahs” from its admirers and yet developmentally, may be doing nothing incredibly remarkable—only able to focus on objects only about 18 inches in front of its face and prone to stare at any shiny object. Nevertheless, a newborn is a miracle to behold, filled with wonder for the world around it and desiring nothing more than to be fed, held, rocked, nurtured, and loved.

The gifts of the magi direct us away from the cute, cuddly, cooing baby Jesus by pointing us to who Jesus really has come to be. The magi offer gold, a possession of kings; frankincense, used in ritual to indicate the presence of the deity; and myrrh, an oil used at the time of death as well as for anointing priests. By their gifts, the wise men reveal the identity of this child: the king before whom nations will bow, the anointed high priest of God, and the suffering servant who will die for the ones he has come to serve.

The “oohs” and “ahs” we offer as we celebrate the Epiphany of Our Lord are not simply for a cooing and cuddly baby Jesus but for a God who chooses to reveal God’s love and mercy by taking human form. On this day, we celebrate that God’s mercy is wider and deeper than we imagined and includes all people and all nations. All people—rich or poor, Gentile or Jew, straight or gay, male or female—are God’s treasure, the precious ones for whom God is willing to die. What do we bring to honor our Lord before whom we bow? We bring the treasure of our lives poured out in praise of God and in service to others.



*We are sent out to be
beacons of the light of
Christ, sharing the good news
of God's love to all people.*

Sunday, January 7th, 2024 Baptism of Our Lord

In the waters of the Jordan, Jesus is revealed as the beloved Son of God. Through this great epiphany, Jesus fulfills all righteousness and becomes the servant of God who will bring forth justice and be a light to the nations. In the waters of baptism we too are washed by the Word, anointed by the Spirit, and named God's beloved children. Our baptismal mission is to proclaim good news to all who are oppressed or in need of God's healing.

The Power of a God Who Is Humble

From the time Jesus first presented himself for baptism by John until today, Christians have puzzled over why Jesus had to be baptized. The act of baptism was understood to be an act of repentance and the cleansing of one's sins. John does not understand why Jesus, whose sandals John is "not worthy to carry" (Matt. 3:11) should seek to be baptized. Instead, John declares to Jesus, "I need to be baptized by you" (Matt. 3:14). Why should the Son of God, who is without sin, need to be baptized?

Frederick Dale Bruner, in *Matthew: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), says that he considers Jesus' first miracle to have occurred at his baptism. The miracle is that Jesus was humble. The divine Son of God humbles himself by allowing John to baptize him. This act of humility is an act of obedience to God and solidarity with all humankind. Jesus has no sins to be forgiven. However, for us, he goes down to the river of repentance with all the other sinners to be baptized. Jesus' baptism, his first adult act as recorded in Matthew's gospel, gives us a clear indication of how Jesus will act for his entire life. The Son of God will come down with us, on our level, identifying with our needs. His baptism, then, foreshadows how his life will end, on the cross. In his death, Jesus experiences the worst we could ever experience as mortal humans. But, because Jesus united with us in baptism, we are united with him in both his death and resurrection. The barriers that separate us from God, including the barriers of sinfulness, mortality, and death, are broken by Jesus' obedience to God, through his humility to come down to us in the depths of our humanity.





Grace Lutheran Church

Pray

Continually



Prayer Concerns:

Gretchen Anderson, Jasmine Anderson, Linnea Haasken, Nancy Nygaard, Marlow Geyer, Justine Isom, Chad Pranke, Beverly Fore, Roger Teich, Gerri Teich, Diane Blegen, David Ulstrom, Darlene Armstrong, John Armstrong, Meagan Barrett Isom, Doug Price, Jody Burton, Cliff and Marla Williams and Pearl Peterson.

Service Personnel:

Adam Herwig, Noah Wicklund, Christopher Unger, Chris Garbacz, Emmie Otto and all other active members

PRAYER WARRIORS.





March 1st – 3rd will be the *Men's winter retreat* for Grace Lutheran members.

The weekend is held at a hunting cabin East of Sandstone and led by Pastor Gary. Happenings throughout the weekend include snowshoeing, fabulous meals, a look at the Sermon on the Mount, evening cards, jocularities, libations and like a weekend in Vegas, whatever happens, stays there in the woods of Danbury.

For more details and how to sign-up, talk with Pastor Gary.



Sunday school Christmas program 2023

Confirmation Class of 2023



Grace Lutheran Church

301 Forest Ave. East

Mora, MN 55051

320.679.1062

moragracelutheran@gmail.com

Return Service Requested



JANUARY