

December 2019

# Grace Lutheran Church & Preschool Newsletter



17880 E. Covina Blvd.  
Covina, CA 91722

Church Office  
(626) 332-4536

Preschool Office  
(626) 967-5855

Church/Preschool Fax  
(626) 967-4027

Email: [office@gracecovina.org](mailto:office@gracecovina.org)  
Website: [www.gracecovina.org](http://www.gracecovina.org)



## *Sunday December 15*

11:30am—Grace Lutheran Carol Sing & Blessing Bag Assembly  
4:00pm—Preschool Christmas Program

## *Christmas Eve Worship Services—Tuesday, December 24*

*Noon—Traditional Worship*

*5pm—Family Contemporary Worship*

*11pm—Traditional Candlelight Worship*



We would like to wish the Grace Lutheran Church Family a very **Merry Christmas** and a happy and healthy **New Year!** We look forward to worshipping with you in the months to come.

Help beautify the Grace Sanctuary with poinsettias this Christmas Season! Poinsettias are \$14/plant—sign up sheets in the Narthex.



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### Upcoming Events

- December 15—Carol Sing and Blessing Bag Assembly
- December 24 —Christmas Eve

## *Pastor's Message*

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Happy Advent and Merry Christmas to you all! This is one of my favorite seasons of the year, second only to Lent and Easter. But, it is also one of the most pressure packed times of the year for me and likely for some of you also. I recently saw a poll that asked if Christmas was a joyful time or a time when the pressure of gift giving makes Christmas more stressful than joyful. To my surprise something like 80% of those polled said it was more stressful than joyful! Can you imagine that? Are you surprised or are you nodding your head in agreement? I'm guessing that more of you are nodding in agreement if the poll I mentioned is at all reflective of how people generally feel about the Christmas Holiday.

I really shouldn't be surprised by those polling numbers when I think about the pressure our consumer driven world puts on us year after year. It seems as though that pressure starts earlier and earlier every year. It used to be stores and advertisers weren't promoting the shopping season until Thanksgiving was over. Now the hype begins before Halloween and I even saw a Christmas display at a local retailer in early Oct this year! That's 3 months, or a quarter of the year of having to start thinking about all the shopping, wrapping and spending that is culturally so much a part of Christmas. No wonder people get stressed out! And very little, if any at all, of the promotion of Christmas has anything to do with the reason for the season. It is almost impossible to not get caught up in the commercialism of one of our most sacred Church holidays.

Instead of anticipating the birth of the world's Savior we anticipate crowds at the retailers & grocery stores, wish lists, Black Friday, (who came up with that idea?) which now happens throughout the year, parties, purchasing the 'perfect' gift and the bills that come due in January. For most of us Jesus doesn't appear in the picture until Christmas Eve, but by then many are simply too worn out to truly experience the joy of Christmas that should accompany this time of year and it only provides relief knowing that Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> means that it's almost over. So, what are we to do to resist the pressure of the buying season?

Perhaps that's where Advent comes in. It is supposed to be a season of anticipation for both the second Advent of Christ and the celebration of His first Advent. The anticipation in and of itself isn't what makes this season joyful because anticipation can come with some stress. Have you ever had to wait for medical test results? Or, to find out if the job interview will result in a new job? How about the 40 weeks of a pregnancy? Those things can be very stressful because the outcomes can be great or very disappointing or even tragic. The lack of a guaranteed outcome or best case scenario is what creates the anxiety.

But, with our Advent the anticipated outcomes are guaranteed to be not just good, but earth shattering great! For those living in Jesus day prior to His birth the anticipation brought with it uncertainty, confusion, fear, and stress despite several of God's angels revealing that the baby in Mary's womb would be the Savior of the world. And that's because it was hard to believe and they had no idea what the virgin birth would mean for humanity and human history. With history on our side

## Pastor's Message (cont.)

we know the outcome and what it meant for all of us. So, anticipation for us comes with a known and blessed outcome that could, theoretically result in the absence of the normal anxiety that comes with waiting. The second Advent also has a known outcome, though the details are uncertain because it hasn't happened yet. But, we know that when it happens the fullness of the Kingdom will be manifest and we will forever be present in the glory of our Lord. Can there be a better outcome than that? And even though we Lutherans don't focus too much on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent it still has the potential to provide us with the hope we all need to push through the difficult times that accompany us in the in between Advents.

But, how does this help me through the pressure of Christmas here and now Pastor? Good question! Advent isn't the only time in our faith life we think about what the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus means for us and the world, it's just that we're more intentional about it during the 4 Sundays in Advent. Which is why I encourage you to participate in worship during this time, especially during this time because the pressure of gift buying and giving is real and we all need a break and reminder from the chaos that begins, sadly, in October. You may be super busy this month, but what is better for your soul than worshipping the One who was born in a barn 2000 years ago. Skipping out on Sundays because you're worn out isn't the remedy, it only adds to your stress level. Come and be reminded of why we celebrate on the 25<sup>th</sup>! You never know, it may bring the joy back to the season that has co-opted by retailers around the world.

*Pastor Steve Otte*

### Worship & Music: Altar Guild — Help Needed!

I am appealing those of you that appreciate attending church and participating in Holy Communion. Behind the scenes are the very few people that set up communion every week and at all worship services, bake bread, and wash the linens.

If you could volunteer to help us in any way, please talk to Vicki Jacobs. Even if you can just help on occasion or in one of the above aspects of the program please talk to me. For one or two people to handle all of the above by ourselves is very tedious!

Thank you for caring!

*Vicki Jacobs (909)374-4678*



**ALTAR GUILD**



# Blessing Bags & Carol Singing



Help to bless the homeless in our community by building a blessing bag! We are collecting them between now and December 15. For a list of items to include, see the insert in your bulletin.

Come sing along and welcome the Holiday Season! On Sunday, December 15 at 11:30pm, we'll gather together in the fellowship hall for appetizers, desserts, fellowship, and our favorite Christmas carols.

## *Suggested items for Blessing Bags:*

- toothbrush
- toothpaste
- playing cards, word puzzles, or dice
- lotion
- sweatshirt/jacket
- lip balm
- beanie hat/cap -
- deodorant -
- blanket/tarp
- bar soap
- washcloth or wipes

- snacks
- gum/breath mints
- bottled water
- an encouraging note -anything else you think someone down on their luck might enjoy!

Please bring donations between now and December 15 and join us for the Grace Family Sing Along to put them together! If you'd like to be a part of the distribution or have any questions, please see Johna Stienstra or email [dduckj4@hotmail.com](mailto:dduckj4@hotmail.com).



ELCA Good Gifts are a creative, meaningful way to support the ministries of the ELCA that mean the most to you and your loved ones. These gifts are real examples from projects currently supported through ELCA churchwide ministries: the ELCA Fund for Leaders, ELCA Global Church Sponsorship, ELCA New Congregations, ELCA Vision for Mission, ELCA World Hunger, Disability Ministries and Lutheran Disaster Response. Each of these programs is a long-term, partnership-based ministry that focus on the needs identified by local congregations and global companion churches and their communities. **Now and between December 31, pick an ornament/donation amount for the Good Gifts tree in the narthex, and make a contribution in memory or in honor of a special person!**

*The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry - Psalm 34:15*

## REMEMBER IN PRAYER

***Please let us know of any changes or updates to prayer requests!***

**Please pray for those with medical needs, including:** Annalisa Morgan, Hailey, Linda Osdale, Lorraine Thorne, Trina Clay, Walter Hoke, Charlene Bergerson, the Davidson Family, Jaxon Turner, Sarah Encabo, Susie Galleta, Shiloh Truman Charles, Mickie Spangler, Kevin Ardery, Jack Kantola, Sylvia Gilmour, Michael Van Raalte, Susan Blonksky, Lennon & family, Harper, Steve Schantz, Tory Strada, Ed McGee, Suzanna Auckland, Dakota Gorske, Roland Palmer, Aria Labrum, Kari Watson, Peggy Salcido, Cliff & Nancy Lansdown, Karyn Yamate, John Carlin, Brian Hauptman, Gary Wilson, Tom Prager, Lynn McDonald, Kathleen Richter, Jason Foutch, John Brahs, Delores Parker, Father Steve De Muth, Addie, Susan Atkison, Rick Domiani, Jr., Sylvia Stevens, Bertha Guillen, Dakota Palanca, and Joyce Sutera.

**Please pray for others in need of prayer, including:** Clair Atrach, Rocio Orozco, Miguel Ventura, Pam Elparia, the Gleason Family, the Willianby family and our Grace neighbors.

**A special note of thanks to God** for the birth of a baby girl to Dierk and Adrianna Biggs.

**Please pray for others in need of prayer, including:** Clair Atrach, Rocio Orozco, Chris Schantz, Miguel Ventura, Pam Elparia, and our Grace neighbors.

- **Please pray for the men and women who are currently serving in the military who are bravely protecting us and our country, including Andrew Ranabarger (Marine Corps).**
- **Please pray for all victims of natural disasters.**
- **Please pray for those who are being faced with grief, and all who know violence and hate.**
- **Please pray for our Grace Lutheran Church Congregation and partners in ministry.**
- **Please pray for our pre-school and infant care program, for Ben Lomond Elementary School, for our school districts, and that all schools will be safe.**
- **Please pray for the firefighters, police force and the leaders of our world, state, and local governments.**
- **Please pray for the ACTION Food Pantry, the homeless that they serve, and all those in need.**

*“The Prayer of the Righteous is Powerful and Effective.” James 5:16*

### ***Please let us know...***

If we don't have your birthday or anniversary listed  
If you have a special announcement  
If someone in your family is sick or in the hospital  
If you move or change your telephone number  
If you will be away for a period of time  
If you feel the church can assist you in any way

### ***Our Prayer Book is...***

Also located in the back of the Sanctuary. You can write your prayer request in this book each Wednesday or Sunday. Remember, you can also contact the church office with your prayer request and updates for the prayer list.

# December

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

1 8:30am Traditional 10:30am Contemporary 1pm Apostolic Assembly	2 12:30 Deborah Circle 4-7pm Action Food Pantry	3 10am Prayer Group 7pm Apostolic Assembly	4 11am Preschool Chapel 11:30 Bible Study 7:00pm Worship	5 9:30am Lydia Lois Circle 10am-1pm Action Food Pantry	6 6-10pm Everlasting Gospel Ministry 7pm Friday Night Rest & Recover	7 8:30am-9pm Everlasting Gospel Ministry 10am AI-Anon
8 8:30am Traditional 10:30am Contemporary 1pm Apostolic Assembly	9 4-7pm Action Food Pantry	10 7pm Apostolic Assembly 6:00pm Church Council Meeting	11 11am Preschool Chapel 11:30 Bible Study 7:00pm Worship	12 10am-1pm Action Food Pantry	13 6-10pm Everlasting Gospel Ministry 7pm Friday Night Rest & Recover	14 8:30am-9pm Everlasting Gospel Ministry 10am AI-Anon
15 8:30am Traditional 10:30am Contemporary 0:00am Combined Service 11:30am Christmas Carols & Fellowship/Assemble Blessing Bags 4:00pm Preschool Christmas Program 5:00pm Apostolic Assembly	16 2:00pm Staff Meeting 4-7pm Action Food Pantry 7:00pm Apostolic Assembly	17 10am Prayer Group 7pm Apostolic Assembly	18 11am Preschool Chapel 11:30 Bible Study 7:00pm Worship	19 10am-1pm Action Food Pantry 5:45pm Heathdale HOA	20 6-10pm Everlasting Gospel Ministry 7pm Friday Night Rest & Recover	21 8:30am-9pm Everlasting Gospel Ministry 10am AI-Anon
22 8:30am Traditional 10:30am Contemporary 1pm -5pm Apostolic Assembly/Sanctuary & Fellowship Hall	23 4-7pm Action Food Pantry	24 Christmas Eve Noon Traditional Worship 5:00pm Family Worship 11:00pm Traditional Candle-light Worship	25 Christmas Day Campus Closed	26 10am-1pm Action Food Pantry	27 6-10pm Everlasting Gospel Ministry 7pm Friday Night Rest & Recover	28 8:30am-9pm Everlasting Gospel Ministry 10am AI-Anon
29 8:30am Traditional 10:30am Contemporary 1pm Apostolic Assembly	30 4-7pm Action Food Pantry	31 1New Years Eve 7pm Apostolic Assembly				

### Sunday Service Times

8:30am Traditional Worship  
10:30am Contemporary Worship  
1:00 pm Apostolic Fellowship

### What's Happening at GLC?

Exciting things are always happening here at Grace! Please take a moment to look at the bulletin board and the table in the narthex and see what's going on. You can also check us out on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GraceLutheranCovina](http://www.facebook.com/GraceLutheranCovina)

## December Birthdays

Ryan Noriega	December 8
Richard Davisson	December 9
Mike McCabe	December 12
Deneice Hadley	December 22
Saige Bergerson	December 25
Michael Bergerson	December 28
Shelby Banks	December 29
Patty Van Raalte	December 30



Each month we collect a new food item for the ACTION Food Pantry. The month of December's featured food items is one-pound bags of rice, one-pound bags of beans, and cans of tomato sauce.

## December Anniversaries

Michael & Charlene Bergerson	December 5
Bob & Connie Brown	December 15



**When you don't know  
where to turn...  
because someone  
drinks too much...**

**Al-Anon Family Groups can help.**

Learn more by attending free confidential meetings at Grace Lutheran Church

**Meetings every Saturday at 10:00 a.m. in room 6**

888-4AL-ANON      www.al-anonesgv.org      al-anon.org

The advertisement features a background image of a road winding through a forest. On the right side of the road, there is a yellow diamond-shaped sign with a black border. The sign has an upward-pointing arrow and a large, stylized black symbol that resembles a combination of a 'G' and a 'P'. The text is overlaid on the image in white and black.

We'll be updating the Grace Covina Newsletter in the New Year! If you'd like to receive the Newsletter and updates via email, please make sure we have your updated email address—we have a lot of outdated emails.

Send an email to [office@gracecovina.org](mailto:office@gracecovina.org) with your preferred address.



**Church Staff**

**Pastor**

Steve Otte  
(714)717-6174

**Preschool Director**

Christy Arreguin  
(626) 967-5855  
preschool@gracecovina.org

**Children's Ministries**

Amber Brown  
(626)203-6928  
GraceSundaySchool@yahoo.com

**Music Ministries**

Jeff Saltonstall  
(626) 375-4311  
Pedro Toro  
(626) 731-4431

**Office Coordinator**

Samantha Henderson  
(626) 332-4536  
office@gracecovina.org

**Church Council**

**President**

Judy McGee  
(323)376-1226

**Secretary**

Brenda Noriega  
(626) 914-1664

**Treasurer**

Robert Ordonez  
(626) 388-6930

**Minister of Witness**

Diana Alley  
(626) 475-7583

**Minister of Worship**

Cindy Skolaski  
(626)332-0209

**Minister of Education**

Dave Brown  
(909) 772-3500

**Minister of Member Care**

Johna Stienstra  
(626)840-3167

*Something to hold on to...  
A friend. A neighbor. Hope. Faith.  
We are all looking for something...*

***Welcome to Grace***

*This is who we are.  
This is what we do.  
You are welcome here.*

**This is who we are...**

Grace is a family of believers who gather in the name of Jesus Christ to experience God's love and acceptance through each other. Our intimate community is one where all are welcome, all are accepted, all are filled and all are sent out to give as they have received.

Though we are a community of faith, Grace is not a place for those who feel they have found everything they need regarding their faith journey. The people of grace feel that we are on a journey that is just beginning for some of us, while for others, that journey is much further along. Wherever we might be in that individual journey, we feel we are called to walk together, as no one should ever have to journey alone. No matter where you are in your beliefs, no matter where you feel you place in life is, you are welcome here.

*"One person can have a profound effect on another. And two people...well, two people can work miracles. They can change a whole town. They can change the world."*  
- Diane Frolov and Andrew Schneider, Northern Exposure, Cicely (1992)

**This is what we do...**

Our community prays for one another. It is part of our duty, as people of faith, to lift up each other's joys and sorrows.

Our community chooses to offer back to God what God has so greatly blessed us with—ourselves, our time, our possessions—all signs of God's gracious love. Our community gathers together for many different reasons and in many different places.

Below are just a few:

**Grace Gatherings:**

- **Traditional Worship & Holy Communion** (every Sunday at 8:30am)
- **Contemporary Worship & Holy Communion** (every Sunday at 10:30am)
- **Midweek Worship & Bible Study** (Bible study at 11:30am and Worship at 7pm every Wednesday)
- **Deborah Circle** (every FIRST Monday of every month at 12:30pm in homes)
- **Lydia Lois Circle** (every FIRST Thursday of every month at 9:30am in Room 6)