

Grace Lutheran Church

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ACTION Food Pantry (626) 319-0554 actionfoodpantry@gmail.com



Newsletter for January, 2023

Sign up for emails at www.gracecovina.org

FaceBook: www.facebook.com/GraceLutheranCovina

A graphic with a dark teal background. On the left, a vertical white bar contains the text 'GRACE-COVINA LUTHERAN CHURCH, COVINA' in blue, sans-serif font. To the right of this bar is a photograph of the church's modern, glass-walled sanctuary. Further right, the text '2023 Annual Meeting' is written in a large, white, serif font. Below this, in a smaller white sans-serif font, it says: 'The Grace-Covina Annual Meeting will be held in-person on Sunday, January 22, 2023 immediately after Worship.'

The Annual Congregational Meeting for Grace Lutheran Church, Covina, will be held after Worship Service on Sunday, January 22, 2023. The congregation will have an opportunity to review the Annual Report, approve the 2023 budget, and elect members to open council and committee positions.

We continue to meet in-person for Sanctuary Worship Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

We are streaming Sunday Worship on our Facebook page. If you have any of the symptoms of COVID-19, or have had contact recently with anyone with COVID-19, we ask that you worship safely with us online. Livestreamed services are available on our YouTube page.

Your Church Council

President | Brenda Noriega
Vice President | Johna Stienstra
Secretary | Diana Alley
Treasurer | Robert Ordóñez

Members-at-Large
Cindy Skolaski | Dave Brown | Nancy Adzovich | Judy McGee

From Pastor Steve

Happy New Year Grace Family,

We have flipped the last page on our 2022 calendars, and as we do that some will reflect on the previous 12 months. I know I did. And as Lindi and I open Christmas cards sent by family and friends many of those envelopes contain recap letters of the year that was, proof that I am not alone in my reflecting. We love to hear about the good things, the 'blessings', our friends and families experienced during the year and empathize with those whose year included some dark moments. It would be great if all we ever read about were the blessings!

But that, unfortunately is not a realistic expectation for life. For any of us. The trials are a byproduct of a broken world occupied by sinful people. Bad stuff will happen, and we will all face various trials each and every year. As a result we tend to judge, or assess our year as a good year, or a bad year based on the seriousness of the trial or the frequency of the various trials we experienced. The scale of 'good year' or 'bad year' tip one way or the other for each of us. How would you say the scale tipped in 2022 for you?

I often hear from folks who had a particularly tough year, "I hope this next year is better than last year." A very natural hope, right? From those whose year was considered 'good' the thought is, "I hope this next year is as good as last year!" A very natural desire. Once we get to the end of the year we often assess, take a deep breath and try to put the year behind us and gear up for a new year. A new year can often feel like a fresh start, even some excitement for what life has in store for us over the next 12 months. Unlike reflecting on the previous year, this is something I really do not do anymore.

There are a variety of reasons for this perspective. The main reason is I have learned that I do not have any control over most of the future events in my life, obviously. It probably took me longer to figure this out that it should have. So, there is no point in trying to predict the future. What comes will come for the most part. Worry or anxiety really does not do me any good and keeps me from being present in the moment and it will not change the future.

In years past I did much more compartmentalizing at the end of each year. Once the year was over putting it all in the past and closing the book on the year that was. Then opening up the new book ready to fill the pages with hopes and dreams for the next 12 months. It was, in a way, a coping mechanism to help me deal with life's challenges and to give me a sense of control, a false sense, but a sense, nonetheless. What I lacked and what led to this dynamic was my faith was not super functional, at least compared to the depth of my faith as it functions now.

I have spoken often of that point in my life when my faith blossomed many years ago at a Cursillo retreat and my relationship with God changed like a light switch being flipped. Life prior to that was mostly filled with negative thoughts and perspectives as I let the trials we all face dictate my attitude and perspective. What I failed to realize was, or understand was I was truly blessed, every day, all the time, because I did not have the kind of relationship with God that I have today.

From Pastor Steve (cont.)

Now, because I have been far more intentional about building that relationship since that fateful retreat I know and believe that God loves me and is always with me in good times and bad times and everything in between. That is the greatest good that exists in this often times, challenging life. The scales did not suddenly tip more in favor of the good things. Metaphorically I placed on the good side of the scale the infinite weight of grace so that nothing that gets placed on the bad side can ever tip the scales over to the bad side.

The hope, peace, joy, and love that coincide with the four weeks of Advent are not just churchy words devoid of purpose. They are promises given by Jesus and the fruit of grace available to all who have faith. I spent many years of my life unaware of the blessing that a life of grace provides. Those years would have probably been judged as not so great by me and I never really expected anything to change just because December came to an end.

When I began embracing and living a life of grace I stopped compartmentalizing my life I stopped putting life in the good or bad box based on circumstances and instead put those good things and the bad things in the blessed box because God is in the center of it all. My hope for 2023 has very little to do with how my life will unfold over the next 12 months. Rather, my hope is for you all, especially those who have a hard time relating to my current perspective, that you do not just know about grace but that you truly live a life of grace.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Steve

Report of the Grace-Covina Church Council December 2022

- Grace has a new waste disposal company, Valley Vista, which will be providing us with a free food waste bin, which will mostly be used by the Food Pantry.
- The Food Pantry is servicing about 110 clients per week.
- The benevolence for the fourth quarter of the year will be going locally. \$1000 is going to be gifted to Ben Lomond Elementary PTA, whose efforts provide the students with activities above and beyond what is covered in the regular school budget.
- We acknowledged the retirement of Dave Brown from the Church Council after many years of faithful service.
- The Pre-School is fully staffed and is looking forward to the new year. Miss Cerise is the new Assistant Director, and Candace Canchola is the new School Board President.
- If you haven't already, please pick up your new offering envelopes in the Narthex.
- The Annual Meeting of the Congregation is scheduled for Sunday, January 22 at 10:45am in the sanctuary.

In His Service
Brenda Noriega, Council President

Thrivent Members – Don't Forget Your Choice Dollar Allocation and Community Action Funds!

Thrivent Members can participate in two separate Thrivent-funded programs - **Choice Dollar Allocation** and **Community Action Team Funds**.

Thrivent Choice

Thrivent Choice charitable grant program engages Thrivent members and Thrivent Member Networks in providing grants that support charitable activities.

The Thrivent Choice program encourages Thrivent benefit members to recommend where Thrivent Financial distributes an amount of its charitable grant funds. Members make this recommendation by directing Choice Dollars to enrolled nonprofit organizations, including churches and their programs (such as the Grace Facilities Renewal Fund).

Eligible Thrivent Members can direct between from \$25 to \$5000 Choice Dollars each year to enrolled nonprofit organizations, including churches. You have until March 31, 2023 to direct your 2022 Choice Dollars.

Thrivent Community Action Teams

How do Thrivent action teams work? Simply gather a team of neighbors or friends for a fundraiser, educational event or service activity. Your team provides the passion that brings your project to life, and Thrivent will help with resources including up to \$250 in seed money! Each Thrivent member can apply to help out a each year for two \$250.00 cards. That's \$500.00 Per member per year!

Contact your Thrivent Agent or go to <https://www.thrivent.com/about-us/membership/thrivent-choice> for more information, to direct Choice Dollars, or to start an Action Team!



Thank you to our Christmas Poinsettia Donors!

June Evinger
in memory of George Michael Evinger

Ken Linden,
in memory of Pat Linden

Vicki & Ron Jacobs,
in memory of Helen Bender
and Madge Ebner

Steve and Lindi Otte,
in Praise and Glory to God

Bonnie Larini,
in memory of Hector Larini
and in honor of the John Call Family

Diana Alley,
in honor of Gen Alley,
and in memory of Irma Casper and Lauren Alley

Barbara L. Bryner,
in honor of Charles and Larry Bryner

Bernie Schantz,
in memory of Keith Schantz

Lauren Alvarez,
in celebration of the Birth of Christ

Nancy Adzovich,
in memory of Steve Schantz



Prayer Requests

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

Please pray for those with medical needs, including: Nancy Rubeseman, Deneice Hadley, Richard Howard, Roger Melendrez, Debbie Gonzales, Yolanda Weidner, Candy Turner, Cheryl Miller, Joan Pelleren, Shelly Ruiz, Elizabeth Ordonez, Patty VanRaalte, Elva Maldonado, Cathy Plante, Felix Noriega, Holly Masters, Gen Alley, Ray, Audrey Fuller, Don Lockman, Robert Ordonez, Sr., Karen Putnam, Arlen Heyne, Gil and Yolanda Erro, Linda Dalton, Charlene Lisberg and Debbie, Rick Turner, Nolan, Herb Westerfield, Noa Buhler, Rose Marie Quesada, Cindy Skolaski, Deanna Kellogg, Jaxon Turner, Art James, Robert Boomsma, Robert Larsen, Trina Clay, Walter Hoke, Connie Brown, the Davidson Family, Jamie Wilcots, Joan and Lee Juneau, Kari Watson, Mike Spangler, Pam Elparin, Ed McGee, Sarah Encabo, and victims of COVID-19.

Please pray for others in need of prayer, including: the family of Ken Gillingham, Tonya Hollenbeck and the family of Dakota Garske, the family of Cesar Cantu, the family and friends of Marie Dabbs, Rocio Orozco, and our Grace neighbors.

Please pray for the men and women currently serving in the military, who are bravely protecting us and our country, including: Andrew Ranabarger (Marine Corps), and Christian Van Allen (Navy), and Phillip Beserra (Air Force).

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 the teachers and children of our preschool and infant care program, and for the teachers and students of Ben Lomond Elementary School, our school districts, and all schools, that they and their families will be safe.

Please pray for hospital staff, all medical personnel and first responders, those in essential services, and the leaders of our world, state, country, and local governments.

Please pray for the ACTION Food Pantry, the clients that they serve, and all those in need.

Prayer requests can be sent to us through the link on the Grace-Covina website at www.gracecovina.org. You can also include your prayer request on your attendance card at Sunday Worship, or email blarini@hotmail.com.

January Scripture Readings



Chris Turner | January 6

Emily Turner | January 13

David Brown | January 14

Austin Hernandez | January

17 Brian Akey | January 20

Natalie McHugh | January

20 Martha Olson | January 23

Maureen Colwell | January 27



Steve & Lindi Otte
January 17

Jerry & Maureen Colwell
January 17

January 1, 2023
First Sunday of Christmas



Isaiah 63:7-9
Psalm 148
Hebrews 2:10-18
Matthew 2:13-23

January 8, 2023
Baptism of Our Lord



Isaiah 42:1-9
Psalm 29
Acts 10:34-43
Matthew 3:13-17

January 15, 2023
Second Sunday after Epiphany



Isaiah 49:1-7
Psalm 40:1-11
1 Corinthians 1:1-9
John 1:29-42

January 22, 2023
Third Sunday after Epiphany



Isaiah 9:1-4
Psalm 27:1, 4-9
1 Corinthians 1:10-18
Matthew 4:12-23

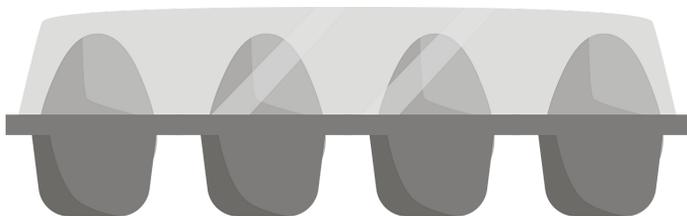
January 29, 2023
Fourth Sunday after Epiphany



Micah 6:1-8
Psalm 15
1 Corinthians 1:18-31
Matthew 5:1-12

January 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 9:30 am: Sunday Worship 12:00 pm: Apostolic Assembly Sunday Worship	2 New Year's Holiday - Preschool Closed	3 10:00 am: Prayer Team (1st Tuesday) 5:00 pm: Apostolic Assembly	4 9:00 am: Preschool Chapel 7:00 pm: Wednesday Online Bible Study	5 12:00 pm: Action Food Pantry Thursday Distribution	6 6:00 pm: Evangelio Eterno Friday Worship	7 9:00 am: Evangelio Eterno Saturday Worship
8 9:30 am: Sunday Worship 12:00 pm: Apostolic Assembly Sunday Worship	9	10 5:00 pm: Apostolic Assembly 7:00 pm: Church Council	11 9:00 am: Preschool Chapel 7:00 pm: Wednesday Online Bible Study	12 9:30 am: Gather - Women's Bible Study 12:00 pm: Action Food Pantry Thursday Distribution 5:30 pm: TLC Quilt Guild	13 6:00 pm: Evangelio Eterno Friday Worship	14 9:00 am: Evangelio Eterno Saturday Worship
15 9:30 am: Sunday Worship 10:30 am: Worship Committee 12:00 pm: Apostolic Assembly Sunday Worship	16 MLK Day - Preschool Closed	17 10:00 am: Prayer Team (3rd Tuesday) 5:00 pm: Apostolic Assembly	18 9:00 am: Preschool Chapel 7:00 pm: Wednesday Online Bible Study	19 12:00 pm: Action Food Pantry Thursday Distribution	20 6:00 pm: Evangelio Eterno Friday Worship	21 9:00 am: Evangelio Eterno Saturday Worship 10:00 am: Grandparents' Day
22 9:30 am: Sunday Worship 11:00 am: Annual Meeting 12:00 pm: Apostolic Assembly Sunday Worship	23	24 5:00 pm: Apostolic Assembly	25 9:00 am: Preschool Chapel 7:00 pm: Wednesday Online Bible Study	26 12:00 pm: Action Food Pantry Thursday Distribution	27 6:00 pm: Evangelio Eterno Friday Worship	28 9:00 am: Evangelio Eterno Saturday Worship
29 9:30 am: Sunday Worship 12:00 pm: Apostolic Assembly Sunday Worship	30	31 5:00 pm: Apostolic Assembly	1 9:00 am: Preschool Chapel 7:00 pm: Wednesday Online Bible Study	2 12:00 pm: Action Food Pantry Thursday Distribution	3 6:00 pm: Evangelio Eterno Friday Worship	4 9:00 am: Evangelio Eterno Saturday Worship



The ACTION Food Pantry buys their eggs in bulk - this costs less, but to distribute this important protein source to their clients they need egg cartons. Please leave your paper or plastic cartons in the Narthex for collection.

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 feel the church can assist you in any way
- If you would like a paper copy of the newsletter mailed to you

Happy New Year



KINGS
SECOND

WEDNESDAY
BIBLE STUDY

GRACE-COVINA

11:00 a.m. in person
7:00 p.m. via Zoom



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