



PARISH NEWS

To Glorify God ♦ To Grow in Faith ♦ To Give in Service ♦ Together in Christ

www.gracelutheranhatfield.org

Grace Lutheran Church, Hatfield PA Rev Nancy M Raabe December 2022

From Pastor Raabe: Christmas Present

Like most of us I have always loved Christmas, and especially the music of Christmas.

But many years ago, long before I had any inkling that one day I would be called to serve the church, I started wondering about the “dark” side of Christmas carols. Why do certain songs about Christ’s birth contain references to his suffering and death? For example, why would a beloved carol like “What Child Is This,” about a baby born in a manger nestled in its mother’s arms, include a stanza about death, dying, and nails piercing bloody hands?



*Nails, spear shall pierce Him through,
The cross be borne for me, for you;
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,
The Babe, the Son of Mary!*

And what about “The Holly and the Ivy,” whose familiar tune brims with Christmas cheer?

*The holly and the ivy,
When they are both full grown,
Of all the trees that are in the wood,
The holly bears the crown.*

Sounds harmless enough, but wait a minute...what crown are we talking about? Sing on, and you’ll discover that it’s not a crown of gold but a crown of thorns, as the lyrics go on to describe a berry as red as blood, a prickle as sharp as a thorn, and bark as bitter as gall.

Oh, my goodness! What is going on? Why can’t we just enjoy images of baby Jesus instead of getting into thorns, blood, and the cross? Because Christ’s birth and death are part of the same story. You can’t have one without the other. The simple truth is this: Christ was born to die.

The best hymns tell at least part of this story, if not all of it. Consider “We Three Kings.” The first traveler brings gold for Christ’s kingship. The second carries frankincense representing God’s presence. But the third? He trudges in after the long journey bearing a box of myrrh, a highly scented resin used for...embalming.

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*Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume
Breathes a life of gathering gloom:
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
Sealed in a stone cold tomb.*

No one would have dreamed of bringing myrrh to our daughter's recent baby shower! But Jesus was no ordinary baby. This third king, or astrologer, or whatever he was, knew that Christ's future was present at his very beginning. So he shopped for his gift in such a way as to honor the fullness of the story of salvation.

"Sweet baby Jesus" is just the first stop on the larger trajectory that ultimately leads to the cross. If we confine ourselves at this time of year to singing simple songs about the baby in the manger, we'll find that those warm fuzzy feelings will quickly fall away in the face of whatever hardship we next bump up against.

Be bold, therefore in seeking out the "dark side" of Christmas carols. With the wisdom that comes from realizing you've made it through another year of life on this complex planet, you'll also come to see more clearly how our earthly existence and Jesus' story are intimately woven together.

Because you can't have one without the other.

There is no better summation of the perfect carol Christmas carol than "This Little Babe" by Robert Southwell (1561-1595), made famous in Benjamin Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*. With a few choice words he launches us into the midst of this cosmic story:

This little Babe so few days old
Is come to rifle Satan's fold;
All hell doth at His presence quake,
Though He Himself for cold doth shake;
For in this weak unarmed wise
The gates of hell He will surprise.

A merry, *meaningful* Christmas to you all.

Pastor Nancy Raabe



From Our Minister of Music

In the hustle and bustle of the holiday, I find music helps me slow down what always feels like a rush toward Christmas. The four weeks of Advent are an opportunity to slow down. We hear familiar words such as Prepare, Waiting, Hope, Peace, Love, Joy, all centered around Christ being the light of the World. All of this is for us to reflect on being "ready". God didn't order a baby named Jesus to be sent to us from Amazon to appear in a manger. The fact that Jesus came into the world, and is coming again, is indeed a light for us to see not just ourselves but others. All of us embrace the love of God. God sent his only Son into the World that we might be saved. Each week during Advent we light the Advent wreath candles, singing and proclaiming Christ as the light of the world.

Have you ever sat in a dark room with just one candle? In a dark room, things come into focus with just one light. If you look carefully you can notice everything and if you were able to see you, your face, your hands, your body, your feet are all illuminated with that one small light. What I am reminded of is that we are called to be light to others. In doing so, we see others and they see us. This very powerful moment is a reminder that we are all loved. The joy of the season is easily seen in the faces of children as they become focused on

Christmas morning and of course, we parents love that joy in our children's lives. It slows down any rush we might feel in our daily life. The light of the world is Christ, it is you, it is me.

In December worship we will sing many familiar tunes and words. Even our service / liturgical music this year will reflect familiar melodies. I invite you to engage your hearts and minds and slow down a bit. We live in a fast moving world but when I think about that one candle in a dark room, that is where I sit in between the hustle and bustle.

On Christmas, in the Byzantine Rite for morning Matins, which takes place in the early morning before sunrise, this prayer service includes a "Hymn of Light" translates into English: "Our savior, the Dayspring from the East, has visited us from on high, and we who were in darkness and in shadow have found the truth: for the Lord, the Lord is born of a Virgin."

Be light, be joy and blessed. God loves you.

Peace on Earth,

Kevin



The Advent Wreath, Past and Present

Churches and Christian families around the globe have long had the custom of lighting candles placed in a wreath of greens each Sunday during Advent, one of the season's most beloved traditions. Advent wreaths are circular, representing God's infinite love, and are usually made of evergreen leaves, which "represent the hope of eternal life brought by Jesus Christ."

The history of the wreath is wrapped up in a charming story from early 19th century Germany. During Advent, children with special needs who attended a certain school in Hamburg would ask their schoolmaster each day if Christmas had arrived. Finally he built a large wooden ring made out of an old cartwheel with 20 small red and 4 large white candles. A small candle was lit successively every weekday and Saturday during Advent. On Sundays, a large white candle was lit. This eventually became the smaller wreath with four or five candles that we know today.

The wreath and winter candle-lighting amid growing darkness strengthen some of the Advent images found in the Bible. The unbroken circle of greens is clearly an image of everlasting life, a victory wreath, the crown of Christ, or the wheel of time itself. Christians use the wreath as a sign that Christ reaches into our time to lead us to the light of everlasting life. The four candles embedded in the wreath mark the progress of the four weeks of Advent and the growth of light. In some traditions each of the candles has its own significance as well, symbolizing the Christian concepts of hope, love, peace, and joy. Sometimes the wreath is embellished with natural dried flowers or fruit. Its evergreen branches lead the household and the congregation to the evergreen Christmas tree. In many homes, the family gathers for prayers around the wreath. You may find some of those prayers on our web site under the Worship menu, at gracelutheranhatfield.org/advent-resources/.

Here at Grace we light the appropriate candles of the wreath at the beginning of each service with a special song that has a different verse designated for each set of candles. Join us to continue this lovely tradition!

Pastor Nancy Raabe



"We light the Advent candle..."

Service of the Longest Night – Wednesday, December 21 at 6:30 p.m. on the Winter Solstice

For many people Christmas is a time of joy and light, but those who have lost loved ones around the holidays or are experiencing grief may struggle to find their voice in this season. Once again we are offering this quiet service on the longest night of the year. It will be a time of reflection and remembrance to open up avenues of expression in the context of the yearning for the coming of Christ that lies at the heart of this season. There will also be opportunities for healing by anointing with oil and healing touch. Please let others know about this special opportunity to be restored by God’s presence.

December Serving Schedule

Date	Altar Guild	Communion Assistant	Lector	Acolyte	Ushers	Greeters	Coffee Hour
12/04/22 8:00 am 10:30 am	W.Walter K.Stone & T.Sarm	B. Schmidt J. Kaler	P. Schmidt J. Shaffer	Usher L.Kaler	R. Smyrl C. MacDonald/ K.Deussing		D.Capanear
12/11/22 8:00 am 10:30 am	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	Walters Richard Badman	Walters J. Tula	Walters K. Heacock/ C. Tula		D. Ball
12/18/22 8:00 am 10:30 am	W.Walter K. Stone/ T. Sarm	Seilers B. Hess	Seilers B.Krout	Usher E.Krout	D. Capanear J. Krout/ K. Deussing		K. Stone
12/24/22 4:00 pm 6:30 pm 9:00 pm	K. Stone TBD E.Woltmann	TBD TBD B. Schmidt	TBD TBD P.Schmidt	TBD TBD Usher	TBD TBD P.Schmidt	M. J. & D. Moyer TBD N/A	N/A N/A N/A
12/25/22 10:30 am	N/A	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	N/A	N/A

Council Offering/Lock-up for December: 8:00 am Peggy Schmidt; 10:30 am: 12/04 – Jean Shaffer, 12/11 – Cathy Farrell, 12/18- Jeff Krout; 12/24 & 12/25 – TBD . Live Streaming: Harold Schaefer, Dan & Tami Sarm

December Calendar

- The Central Philadelphia (Korean) Church will be worshipping on Sundays at noon in the Sanctuary.
- Tues. are Bread Drop Sandwich Days. The coolers will be out from 8am-7pm.
- Yoga every Wednesday at 6:15 pm.
- Choir every Sunday at 9:30 am.

Sat Dec. 3, 2022		Hatfield Community Christmas Tree Lighting and Special Events
	2:30pm	Pet pictures with Santa
	5:00pm	Hot dogs, games and crafts
	6:30pm	Railroad Plaza for Tree Lighting
Sun Dec. 4, 2022	8:00am	Worship/Communion
	9:15am	Sunday School
	10:30am	Worship/Communion
	11:30am	Christmas Tree decorating after worship in the Sanctuary
	6:00pm	Laymen Playmen
Tue Dec. 6, 2022	7:00pm	Stitchers
	7:00pm	Worship & Music Team Meeting
	7:00pm	Property Team Meeting
	7:00pm	Laymen Playmen Rehearsal
Wed Dec. 7, 2022	10:00am	WELCA
	1:00pm	Choir
Thurs Dec. 8, 2022	7:00pm	Laymen Playmen Rehearsal
Sun Dec. 11, 2022	8:00am	Worship
	9:15am	Sunday School
	10:30am	Worship
	11:30am	Congregational Meeting after worship
	6:00pm	Laymen Playmen
Tues Dec. 13, 2022	7:00pm	Council Meeting in person, Zoom option
Wed Dec. 14, 2022	1:00pm	Choir
	7:00pm	Stepping Stones Comm. Meeting via Zoom
Sun Dec. 18, 2022	8:00am	Worship/Communion
	9:15am	Sunday School
	10:30am	Worship/Communion
Wed Dec. 21, 2022	6:30pm	Longest Night Service
Fri Dec. 23, 2022		Church Office and Stepping Stones Closed
Sat Dec. 24, 2022	4:00pm	Christmas Eve Services
	6:30pm	Christmas Eve Services
	9:00pm	Christmas Eve Services
Sun Dec. 25, 2022		Christmas Day
	10:30am	Worship: Lessons and Carols
Mon Dec. 26, 2022		Church Office and Stepping Stones Closed
Tues Dec. 27, 2022	7:00pm	INreach
Wed Dec. 28, 2022	6:30pm	Choir
	7:30pm	HEART Meeting
Fri Dec. 30, 2022		Church Office and Stepping Stones Closed
Sun Jan. 1, 2023		New Year's Day
	10:30am	Worship/Communion: First Sunday of Christmas
Mon Jan. 2, 2023		Church Office and Stepping Stones Closed

WORDS OF GRATITUDE



- To those involved in setting up, cleaning up and providing for our Coffee Hour. We appreciate being able to relax and visit together after worship.
- Thanks to those who provided for and served at our festive Thanksgiving Eve reception following worship. A good time was had by all, and we were delighted to host our sisters and brothers from Heidelberg UCC in this way.
- A special thank you to Kitty Heckler for sponsoring our Christmas tree this year.
- To the Property Team for their work in cleaning out our 30 N. Main property, preparing for its renovation, arranging for the removal of the large tree in front, and putting new glass in our church signs, making them much easier to read.
- To our Sunday School class for providing catchy and meaningful phrases for those signs. They are being noticed.
- To those helping out with Bread Drop deliveries, putting out coolers Tuesday mornings and taking the filled coolers up to Emmanuel in Souderton on Tuesday evening.
- To our INReach team for all the special ways they let our homebound members know they are remembered in love at this time of the year.
- To our Youth parents for their ideas and energy.

WELCA (Women of the ELCA)

WELCA ladies, that special time of the year is once again upon us. It's hard to believe that 2022 is almost over. Wednesday December 7th is our next WELCA meeting and we will be doing Christmas cards for our homebound members and also giving them a small gift. These cards will be going with the Sweets for Sharing made by the INreach committee. Ladies, you don't need to bring any cards to the meeting, we have plenty. After the meeting we will be going out for lunch 🍷🍔; Dutch treat and we will be going to PJ Whelihan's. Hope everyone can make it. If you would like to bring a friend, please do, just let me know because I will need to make a reservation. Take care, Barb Watts

Advent and Christmas "Bits and Bobs"

Join Pastor Raabe every day during Advent at <https://gracelutheranhatfield.org/an-advent-pilgrimage/> (under the Worship menu of our web site) for an "Advent Pilgrimage." This is a three-to-four minute journey through scripture, a short excerpt from contemporary literature, and a brief reflection, all from the fine new devotional resource *Prophets and Promises* published by Augsburg Fortress. Copies of this devotional are also available at church, or we can mail you one on request.

To help make your season merry and bright, Council member Rich Woltmann has kindly ordered a number of attractive Christmas magnets for Grace members. Find these on the table in the narthex.

You should have received a postcard in the mail about our Christmas service schedule. Pass it on or pick up more copies at church to pass along. How does the church grow? By invitation!



Adopt-A-Family Christmas Project 2022

During this Advent season, please join in the spirit of giving by participating in our *Adopt-A-Family Project*. Most of us are looking forward to family gatherings at this time of the year, but for some families in our community, it is a time of concern about providing daily needs. We can help with some of these concerns by providing them with gifts for each member of their family.

Grace members and friends are invited to provide gifts to families in our area to help them celebrate a traditional family Christmas and to experience sharing gifts with their family. This year we will be sharing our gifts with seven families from Stepping Stones. In addition to the four families we have adopted, the Scouting community will be shopping for two families, and a local business will be shopping for one family.

We hope you will do some Christmas shopping for our families this year. Check out the display in the narthex. Suggested items for each family are available for your choosing. We encourage you to shop as you do now – online or in stores. You may also choose to do gift cards.

Angel gifts will be collected for the Hatfield Christmas Committee for area families as well as our seven families. A list of items is included below and will also be available near the display in the narthex. These items cannot be purchased with food stamps and are personal items needed by families that are serviced by our area food cupboards. Your items may be brought to church anytime. We are also collecting warm socks for our friends at Bread Drop. These socks should be inexpensive, warm crew or knee socks.

**All gifts for the Adopt-a-Family, Bread Drop Socks, and the Angel Gifts
are due by Sunday Dec. 18th.**

The Giving in Service Team – Jean Shaffer, Diane Ball, Carol MacDonald, Barb Watts,
Kay Deussing, Mary Jane Moyer, Ashley Groff and Kay Stone

Items for Angel Boxes:

Paper Towels	Toothpaste/toothbrushes
Bathroom Tissue	Shampoo (be sure lids are closed tightly)
Kleenex (tissues)	Deodorant (men and women)
Bar Soap	Razors and Feminine Products

Congregational Budget Meeting on December 11

Please make plans to stay after the 10:30 service on December 11 for a congregational meeting to approve the 2023 budget. Copies of the budget are available in the narthex or we can send them to you on request. The meeting will begin immediately following worship.

YOGA (Hatha) CLASS Continues

Every Wednesday at 6:15 through December 14. All levels. Poses and sequences will work on using all parts of the body and will vary from week to week. This will be suitable for those with some yoga experience but also for anyone with little to none, as options will be offered for the various poses. The goal is to work on strength and flexibility gradually while gaining the ability to focus on breath and awareness. Contact Kathy Stawasz at [215-760-6297](tel:215-760-6297) with any questions.

PRAYER LIST

Please let Pastor Raabe know if you would like someone added to this list, or if someone you have added is no longer in need of urgent prayers.



In Need of Ongoing Prayers:

Liz Bauer, Suzanne Colville, Marilyn Forst, Helen Godshall, Bob Kaler, Peggy Long, Hazel Mascaro, Gerry Mason (Richard Badman's son), Pam Matolicz, Bob Rufe (Mary Jane Moyer's brother), Joyce Salter, Nancy Sellers, Bailey Vinson, (Liz Bauer's great-granddaughter), Sue & Faith Rowbottom.

In Current Need of Prayers:

Cassi Lambert, Kristopher Yoder, Annette Beyer, Cindy Kunkel, Ron and Karen Hudson, Lisa Kane, Jerry Mascaro, Lorraine Snyder, Vickie West, Sandy Klinger, Debbie Zuech-Smyrl, Madiafe Sheriff, Rhonda Wagner Berger (granddaughter of the Wagner property original owners), Dean Moore, Don Cabrera (Jean Shaffer's daughter's father-in-law), Peg Malloy, Diane Miller, Donna Herman (friend of the Badmans), Judith Stangl (John's sister), Daniel Hopwood (Tom Hopwood's son), Laurie Ronan (the MacDonalds' neighbor), Jim Finnemeyer, Tom Burke (Laura Kratz's daughter's co-worker), Bill Reilly (Bob Reilly's brother), Jan Madigan (Sue Wieland's niece), John Renick, Lou Farrell, Joan Wright & Alicia Hollingsworth (friends of Linda Renick), Brittany Brown, the family of Lori & Jim Pluda, Diane Pierson, Betty Parry (friend of Kay & Frank Stone who is recovering from a fall and just lost her husband), Adrienne Kroesser & family (friends of Jaime Kaler), Robert Naragon (friend of Frank & Kay Stone), Joanne Moyer.

For all who grieve, including the family and friends of: Ron Thomsen and Lewis Parry (friends of Kay & Frank Stone), Ruth McMahon (Laura Slugg's mother), Dolores McGlinchey, Lorraine Snyder (Jaime Kaler's grandmother).

For those in active duty military service: Robert McNulty, Marines, Jessica Murphy, Air Force; Matthew Smyrl, Army; Nathaniel Smyrl, PA Army National Guard; Eric Gutsche (Janice Swartz's grandson), boot camp.

For active military deployed overseas: Kyle Murphy, Air Force

"Stepping" into the Holidays

Hard to believe Summer is so far behind us and we're already into the wonderful Christmas Season! Stepping Stones is excited to celebrate the holidays with Christmas Hat and Headband Day, Ugly Sweater Day, Christmas PJ Day, and so much more! We are just so happy to be getting back to our new normal and celebrating the holidays as one big family again. Please keep an eye on our Facebook page to see all of our smiling faces; there's always something in there to brighten your day. Merry Christmas and Happy and Healthy New Year to you all!

-- Jessica Moran, Director, Stepping Stones

Offering Envelope Update

"Where are my 2023 offering envelopes?" Well...the ordering process went a bit more slowly this year than usual, but Pastor Raabe and the Giving to God team want you to know they ARE in production. We'll make sure they are hand-delivered to you before you'll be needing them. Check Grace Notes and the bulletin for the announcement of when they have arrived.



Welcome (Warming) Center

With winter approaching, the Warming Center Task Force led by Council member Cathy Farrell has been hard at work to get the Center up and running. They would appreciate donations of the following. If you can donate any of these supplies, please let Cathy Farrell know or just bring them to church:

Instant coffee, Keurig coffee servings, tea, hot chocolate, sugar, powered milk for creamer (Coffee mate), packets of soup, cups, (drinking and coffee), bowls, paper towels, napkins, plastic utensils, trash bags, coffee stirrers, coffee filters, and toilet paper. We also are in need of a snow shovel, ice melt and power strips. And if you have any spare board games or decks of cards, feel free to donate those as well.

Thank you for your help!



EEC Food Cupboard

As we move into the Season of Giving and Jesus's selfless gift to all of us, please remember that MANY in our community will be going without and your ongoing, consistent response is a wonderful blessing. Thank you so much for picking up one or two extra items for our neighbors in need each time you shop. Every offering is helpful!

Below, please find the most recent pantry shortages:

Food: Cereal, Spaghetti sauce, tomato paste, pancake mix & syrup, brownie mix

Household & Personal Care*: hair conditioner, paper towels, 13 gal trash bags, baby wipes

Gift Cards: Grocery gift cards are always welcome

*If clients are able to get some monetary help from a government assistance program (SNAP), these items can NOT be purchased with those funds.

Your non-perishable donations can be placed in our narthex bins, OR, if necessary, in the outside food cupboard plastic bins located by the doors leading into Stepping Stones (preferably on Sunday mornings when it can be brought inside). Please be aware...if food is left outside in the elements, it might not be picked up for a few days.

Upcoming distribution dates & times:

Tuesdays 5:30 - 6:30 pm : December 6 & 20

Tuesdays 1 - 2 pm: December 13 & 27

The food cupboard is open to all Hatfield borough residents, so please reach out if you, or someone you know, would benefit from receiving supplemental food/household items. Messages for Janet Hague can be left at 215-855-2540; foodcupboard@yahoo.com. You can also call/email Carol MacDonald @215-872-0472 macdonald125@comcast.net



Flower Sponsors – the 2023 sign-up sheets are in the Narthex if you would like to sponsor flowers in 2023. Pick your dates now!! Cost \$17.00 each. Questions contact Kathy Stawasz 215-760-6297

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December 3rd

Hatfield Community
Tree Lighting & Events

December 4th

Grace Tree decorating
After worship

December 11th

Congregational Meeting after worship

December 21st

Service of the Longest Night, 6:30 p.m.

December 24th

Christmas Eve Services
4:00pm
6:30pm
9:00pm

December 25th

Christmas Day, 10:30 am
Lessons & Carols

January 1st

New Year's Day, one service at 10:30 a.m.



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