

PARISH NEWS

Grace Lutheran Church, Hatfield PA

December 2024

To Glorify God I To Grow in FaithTo Give in ServiceTogether in Christwww.gracelutheranhatfield.orgRev. Nancy M. Raabe, Pastor

From the Pastor: Coping with Christmas Stress

Hope, peace, joy, love: These are words our tradition associates with the coming of Christmas. But let's be honest. What is the stark reality of this season for many of us? How about stress, anxiety, isolation, or depression?

My intention is not to be a "Debbie downer" as we hear perky holiday tunes springing up all around us, but to offer you some tools to lead you through these weeks so that you can truly welcome the Christ child with open arms. Here are some ways to cope with the realities that we face.

Christmas gifts don't have to cost lots of money. Help someone with a task they can't do on their own. Bake a cake, walk a dog, offer to babysit. Pass along a book you have already read and loved. Won't it be special for someone to know you held and treasured that very book in your hands? Take someone to lunch. Plan a special night out or a holiday experience – a concert, a movie, even a walk or drive to see Christmas lights. The gift of your time is priceless.

Family tensions that already exist are going to resurface at holiday times, no getting around it. Partly this is because we have unrealistic expectations of coming together at Christmas as a happy family. First, appreciate that everyone is under stress to some degree as they are trying to get everything done. If tensions break out, try to identify what may be going on with that person. Ask compassionate questions. Maybe you'll discover an avenue for healing that would otherwise have remained festering beneath the surface. Avoid touchy subjects. If they start to come up, divert, divert, divert!

Isolation, especially at holiday times, is a real and present danger for many. Perhaps you've lost a spouse or partner in the past year or recently been through a breakup. Perhaps your child and their family have moved so far away it's not practical to be together this year. Don't hesitate to pick up the phone, or write a card, or send a text message to a friend or family member. Or to your pastor! They'll be touched you are thinking of them, and even if they don't respond right away, you know that your expression of love reached them. Find organizations for which you can volunteer during these days. Our Thursday soup suppers are continuing, and we'll be serving the day after



Christmas. Coming face to face with those who are in need binds us together and generates the healing promise of a new community.

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If you are experiencing prolonged **depression**, please seek the care of a doctor or therapist. With or without that skilled care, following are some spiritual techniques for beginning and ending each day that will help ground you in the peace of Christ that passes all understanding:

- When you wake: Trace a small cross on your lips and say, "O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise." (Psalm 51:15; this is also how we begin the beautiful service of Morning Prayer.)
- When you are preparing to meet the new day: "Awake, my soul! Awake, harp and lyre! I myself will awaken the dawn. I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praise to you among the nations. For your steadfast love is greater than the heavens, and your faithfulness reaches to the clouds." (Psalm 57:8-9)
- When you are moving through your day, recall the words of the ancient Jesus Prayer, often called "the prayer of the heart," as often as you can: "Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." You may shorten it as you choose; its most basic form has become "Lord, have mercy." This lays the entirety of our need before our loving Savior. Some ancient seekers were known to have recited it thousands of times each day, for years.
- End the day with the spiritual practice of daily examen. As you are settling down for the night, ask yourself: When in this day was I aware of God's presence? (Be as specific as you can.) When were my actions and choices in this day pleasing to God? When were my actions and choices not pleasing to God? Then, turn this all over into God's care so that you may rest peacefully and awake to a new day and new hope.

I pray that these ideas will be of some solace to you as we move through Advent toward Christmas. "Let every heart prepare him room!"

Yours in the hope of Christ,

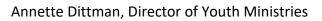
Pasta Normy Raabe



Christmas Worship Schedule

Sundays in Advent: December 1, 8, 15 and 22, at 8 and 10:30 a.m. The Longest Night ("Blue Christmas"): An experience of darkness and the coming of Christ's light, Thursday, December 19 at 7:00 p.m. following the Soup Supper. Christmas Eve: 4:00 p.m., 6:30 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. First Sunday of Christmas, December 29: Sing your favorite carols in ONE SERVICE at 10:30 a.m. This will also be Deacon Bruce Tonkin's last Sunday with us.

Youth Group Highlights for the remainder of 2024: On Saturday 12/7 we will participate in the Hatfield Christmas Tree lighting. Thanks to all families for their help and support!





STEPPING STONES

As 2024 draws to a close I am reminded about my first Christmas as Director at Stepping Stones. I think on our first Santa visit with help from Laura and Matt Slugg; laughter in the meeting room as we marveled over Santa's big belly and how amazing he was going to look for the kids. I think of the wonder and joy that was in each kid's eyes as they saw Santa for the first time and couldn't wait to tell him how good they had been all year long. Christmas is always a special time at Stepping Stones and, perhaps, because we're a little smaller this year it feels like that first Christmas with all the joy, love, and laughter that Christmas deserves.

We will spend our month with lots of spirit days like ugly sweater day, Christmas PJs and movies, cookies, and Christmas hats. Stepping Stones will be closed on 12/24, 12/25, and 12/31 and 1/1 for the holidays but we will be back on 1/2/25 for the New Year. From us to you we hope you have the Merriest of Christmases and the Happiest of New Years. Blessings to us all in 2025.

Jessica Moran, Director

Adopt-A-Family Christmas Project 2024



During the Advent season, we prepare for the birth of Jesus. Each Sunday, we light candles on the Advent Wreath –HOPE, PEACE, JOY, LOVE. As we prepare for our family gatherings, let's remember those families who may not be able to provide the basic necessities for their loved ones. The Giving in Service team invites you to help provide gifts to families in our area to allow them to share in the joy of Christmas. Again, this year we will be sharing our gifts with several families from Stepping Stones.

New this year, we would like to provide food for our families. We will collect food for their shelves for winter. Take a tag from the Christmas tree to provide the food item listed.

Angel gifts will be collected for the Hatfield Food Cupboards and our Adopted families. Take a list of items needed from the table near the display in the narthex. These items cannot be purchased with food stamps and are personal items needed by families. Your items may be brought to church anytime.

DUE date for both our Adopt-a-Family gifts and the Angel gifts is **Sunday Dec. 15th**. What a wonderful way to begin the Advent Season by giving to one of our families.

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

Angel Boxes

Once again, we are collecting personal care items for our Angel Box distributions at Christmas time. These items will go to our Adopt-A-Families and to the two Hatfield Food Cupboards. The Food Cupboards are experiencing continually increasing numbers of families requesting their help. Collection boxes will be in the Narthex through December 15th. Thank you in advance for your continued support.

Items needed include:

Paper towels	Toothpaste and toothbrushes
Toilet paper	Razors
Kleenex	Bar soap and Deodorant
Shampoo (please tighten all lids)	Feminine products



From Dee Mancuso: A big "Thank you to the Welca ladies for the recent visit and bringing me soup and flowers. Very much appreciated !"



Sweets for Sharing 2024

Calling all Cookie Makers! On December 11th WELCA and the INreach team will once again be putting together Christmas boxes of confections for our homebound and Grace staff. Please consider donating cookies (freshly made or store bought) or individually

wrapped candies so that we can continue this much-loved tradition. We will be collecting these items at Grace in the narthex (until 12/11) and putting them together Wednesday evening Dec. 11th at Peggy & Bruce Schmidt's house. Thank you in advance for your generous offerings! Any questions OR to arrange a pickup or drop off of your donation, please call or email: carol.w.macdonald@gmail.com; 215-872-0472

MINISTER OF MUSIC search update

The Music Minister Search Committee has completed its work, and Council is making preparations to present an offer to a candidate. We sincerely thank the members of this committee for their diligence and commitment to this process over the past three months: Cathy Farrell, chair; with Barb Hess, Bob Reilly, Ken Seiler, and Harold Schaefer. An announcement will be forthcoming.

WELCA

I can't believe this is our last meeting for 2024; our meeting is December 4^{th.} We will be writing out Christmas cards for the Homebound members which will be delivered with the cookies by the INreach committee, Sweets for Sharing. You don't need to bring cards, we have plenty. On December 1st after church, we will be putting our cards and the cards from the congregation together to go with the cookies. I really hope you can stay and help. Thank you, Barb Watts 😨

THURSDAY SOUP SUPPERS

If you haven't experienced our Soup Suppers yet, we warmly invite you to attend. We regularly welcome members from the neighborhood along with members of Grace; there is always someone new each week. Soups are freshly made, and the bread is also fresh from Hearth Bakery. Stop in at 5:30 any Thursday to experience new community being formed. Make new friends and spread the word. Postcards to share are in the narthex.





THE BREAD DROP schedule for December is: 12/3/2024 Jess Moran; 12/10/2024 Priscilla Landis; 12/17/2024 Laura Kratz; NO BREAD DROP ON 12/24 BECAUSE OF CHRISTMAS EVE AND NO BREAD DROP ON 12/31 BECAUSE OF NEW YEAR'S EVE. January schedule will resume as normal.

YOGA every Wednesday at 6:15 pm. Last class for this year is 12/18/24. We will resume 1/8/25.



Yoga is for all levels. 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 an ability to focus on breath and awareness.

WHERE: Grace Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall; COST: \$7/class (checks can be made payable to Grace Lutheran Church); Contact: Kathy Stawasz with any questions (215.760.6297)

CONGREGATIONAL BUDGET MEETING

A congregational meeting will be held following the 10:30 service on **Sunday, December 8**, to approve the 2025 budget. Please be in attendance so that we can have a quorum and discussion. Copies of the 2025 budget will be available later this month in the narthex.

December 2024 Serving Schedule

Date	Altar Guild	Communion Assistant	Lector	Acolyte	Ushers	Coffee Hour
12/01/24						
1 st Sunday in						
Advent					P. Schmidt &	Don
8:00 am	W. Walter	B. Schmidt	P. Schmidt	Usher	D. Ball	Capanear
10:30 am	K. Stone &	K. Stawasz	J. Kaler	L. Kaler	J. Kaler &	
	T. Sarm				K. Deussing	
12/08/24						
8:00 am	W. Walter	B. Schmidt	The Walters	Usher	The Walters	Bruce
10:30 am	K. Stone &	B. Hess	B. Krout	E. Krout	J. Krout &	Schmidt
	T. Sarm				C. Tula	
12/15/24						
8:00 am	W. Walter	D. Kunkel	The Seilers	Usher	The Seilers	Diane
10:30 am	K. Stone &	B. Hess	T. Sarm	Usher	K. Stone &	Ball
	T. Sarm				K. Heacock	
12/22/24					P. Schmidt	
8:00 am	W. Walter	B. Schmidt	P. Schmidt	Usher	& D. Ball	Кау
10:30 am	K. Stone &	F. Stone	The Sluggs	Usher	The Sluggs	Stone
	T. Sarm					
12/24/24						
Christmas Eve						
4:00 pm						N/A
6:30 pm		B. Schmidt			P. Schmidt	
9:00 pm						
12/29/24						
One Service						N/A
10:30 am						

Council Offering/Lock-up for December is: 8:00 am, Laura Kratz; 10:30 am, Jeff Krout Live Streaming: Harold Schaefer, Dan & Tami Sarm, Jayson Tula

2025 Serving Schedule Volunteers.....Yes, it's that time of year to start setting up the 2025 serving schedule. If you are currently on the schedule, we will keep you on unless we hear from you. We are always looking for new volunteers. Please contact one of us if you would like to volunteer. Thanks.
Altar Guild - Emily Woltmann 215-822-5909, emiwol95@gmail.com
Communion Assistants - Carol MacDonald 215-872-0472, carol.w.macdonald@gmail.com
Lector and Acolytes - Kathy Stawasz 215-760-6297, kathystawasz@gmail.com
Ushers and Coffee Hour - Kay Stone 215-368-3725, kaystone@comcast.net
Live Streaming - Harold Schaefer 484-576-0611, schaefeh 19440@yahoo.com
Thanks in advance for volunteering. Kathy 215-760-6297

December Calendar

- The Jesus Love Church (formerly Central Philadelphia) will be worshiping on Sundays at 12:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary and Friday night worship at 8:00 pm.
- Tues. are Bread Drop Sandwich Days. Donations are accepted from 8am-7pm.
- Wednesdays at 6:15 pm is Yoga in Fellowship Hall (*last class for this year is 12/18/24*)

Sun Dec 1, 2024	8:30am 10:30am 2-4 pm	Worship -1 st Sunday in Advent Worship -1 st Sunday in Advent Advent Family/Sanctuary Decorating
Tues Dec 3, 2024	7:00pm	Stitchers
Wed Dec 4, 2024	10:00am	WELCA Meeting
Thurs Dec 5, 2024 Sat Dec 7, 2024	5:30pm 5-6pm	Thursday Soup Supper Hatfield Community Christmas Tree Lighting (begins at Grace at 5:00)
Sun Dec 8, 2024 Mon Dec 9, 2024	8:00am 10:30am 11:30am 6:00pm	Worship-2 nd Sunday in Advent Worship-2 nd Sunday in Advent Congregational Budget Meeting Fellowship Committee Meeting
Tues Dec 10, 2024	7:00pm 7:00pm	Property Meeting Worship & Music Team Meeting
Thurs Dec 12, 2024	5:30pm	Thursday Soup Supper
Sun Dec 15, 2024	8:00am 10:30am	Worship-3 rd Sunday in Advent Worship-3 rd Sunday in Advent
Mon Dec 16, 2024	7:00pm 7:00pm	Stepping Stones Committee Meeting, in person
Tues Dec 17, 2024 Wed Dec 18, 2024	7:00pm 6:15pm	Council Meeting, Zoom option Last Yoga until January
Thurs Dec 19, 2024	5:30pm 7:00pm	Thursday Soup Supper Longest Night Worship Service
Sun Dec 22, 2024	8:00am 10:30am	Worship-4 th Sunday in Advent Worship-4 th Sunday in Advent
Tues Dec 24, 2024		Office & Stepping Stones Closed NO BREAD DROP
	4:00pm	Christmas Eve Worship Service
	6:30pm	Christmas Eve Worship Service
	9:00pm	Christmas Eve Worship Service
Wed Dec 25, 2024	E-20pm	Office & Stepping Stones Closed for Christmas Day
Thurs Dec 26, 2024	5:30pm	Thursday Soup Supper
Sun Dec 29, 2024 Tues Dec 31, 2024	10:30am	ONE Worship Service Office & Stepping Stones Closed <i>NO BREAD DROP</i>
Wed Jan 1, 2025		Office & Stepping Stones Closed for New Year's Day



Prayer List

Your INReach and Worship and Music teams have been discussing how to make our prayer list more manageable. We are working on a new system in which the full prayer list will be published Parish News, while the list in Grace Notes (weekly newsletter) will include prayers only for Grace members and immediate family

rather than including extended family and friends. Please submit requests to Lynn Fasick at graceassistant40@gmail.com, specify whether the need is "ongoing" or "current, and notify her if and when the name may be removed from the list. Thank you!

PRAYER LIST

Please let Pastor Raabe or Lynn 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 <u>Ongoing</u> Prayers: Liz Bauer, Suzanne Colville, Bob Kaler, Peggy Long, Hazel Mascaro, Jerry Mascaro, Gerry Mason (Richard Badman's son), Bob Rufe

(Mary Jane Moyer's brother), Joyce Salter, Nancy Sellers, Bailey Vinson (Liz Bauer's great-granddaughter), Nancy Dustman (Joyce Salter's sister).

In <u>Current Need</u> of Prayers: Cassi Lambert, Kristopher Yoder, Lisa Kane, Vickie West, Sandy Klinger, Peg Malloy, Daniel Hopwood (Tom Hopwood's son), John Renick, Joanne Moyer, Sheran Shenk (friend of Bruce & Peggy Schmidt), Angelina (Mascaro) Trotter, Alice Ciarrocca (friend of Karen Heacock & Phyllis McKeefrey), Anita Spisak (Ken Seiler's mom), Christopher Humlhanz (Jaime Snyder's cousin), Betty Poling (June Detweiler's sister), Regi Gambino (friend of Lynn Plawa-Oxenford), Annette Beyer (friend of the Reillys), Tricia O'Neill (member of the Stepping Stones family), Joan Fonseca (B. Schmidt's cousin), Betty Ball (Diane Ball's mother-in-law), Pat Ferkitich (friend of Nancy Sellers), Bob Rocheleau (Bruce Schmidt's brother-in-law), Atticus Jones (Lynn & Mike Plawa-Oxenford's nephew), Connie Plawa (Lynn's sister-in-law), Priscilla (Shaffer) Hollerbach, John & Bonnie Stangl, Milford Lyndaker (friend of Karen Seiler).

For all who grieve, including the family & friends of: Dan Black (Laymen Playmen), Roger Smith (friend of the Shaffer family), Buzz Benson (Karen Seiler's uncle), Al Riley (Bruce Schmidt's cousin), Goodloe Sutler (friend of Peggy Schmidt), Jan Madigan (Sue Wieland's niece), Sally Muntz.

For those in active duty military service: Jessica Murphy, Air Force; Matthew Smyrl, PA Army National Guard; Cole Dempsey, Air Force (Laura Kratz's grandson).

For active military <u>deployed overseas</u>: Kyle Murphy, Air Force; Robert McNulty, Marines; Eric Gutsche, Army (Janice Swartz's grandson), Nathaniel Smyrl, PA Army National Guard.

The Laymen Playmen 2025 Show: Dates are March 21-23 and 28-30, 2025

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat

Auditions will be held on:

Wednesday, November 6, 2024 at 7:00 pm and Saturday, November 9, 2024 at 10:00 am

The audition form is available online and may be printed off and filled out before you arrive.

Looking for children ages 8-11 for children's choir and teens/adults of all ages for the show

Auditions and Performances will be held at:

Lansdale United Methodist Church, 300 N. Broad Street, Lansdale, PA 19040

(parking behind the church off 4th St)

<u>Rehearsals:</u> Rehearsals will be held on Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays at Lansdale United Methodist Church, First Rehearsal/Readthrough: Wednesday November 20 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Detailed information regarding auditions and the show may be found on: <u>www.laymenplaymen.org</u>



EEC FOOD CUPBOARD

As we approach the Season of Giving, please know how much your gifts of food and household products are appreciated by others in our

community. Each week, many families wait in all kinds of weather outside of Emmanuel for the doors to open so that they can shop for some basic needs. Janet Hague told us that "last month we hit a record of 101 non-duplicated households who shopped in October. Thank you for your continued faithfulness in helping us to help others."

Food items: Spaghetti Sauce, Tomato Paste, canned whole Potatoes, Pancake Syrup, Cake Mix and Icing, Brownie Mix

Household & Personal Care*: Toothpaste, Toilet Paper, Shampoo & Conditioner (PLEASE TIGHTEN ALL LIDS!) **Gift Cards:** Grocery gift cards are always welcome and very helpful, especially ALDI & Giant! Your non-perishable donations can be placed in our Grace narthex bins by the conference room, and they will be brought to the EEC when bins are full.

Upcoming distribution dates & times:

Tuesdays 5:30 - 6:30 pm: Dec 3, 17, Closed 31stOpen again Jan 7th, 2024

Tuesdays 1 - 2 pm: Dec 10, **Monday** 23rd Open, Closed 24th 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.

SoupAThon Wrap Up: Many thanks to all of you who contributed to a very successful event on November 10th! With your purchases & contributions, we were able to sell 46 quarts of soup and made \$284! We are so happy to be able to support our veterans and first responders by donating 1/2 of that to Tails of Valor Paws of Honor, <u>tailsofvalor.org</u>. To our Soup Makers: all of your delicious contributions (53 quarts!) have allowed us to also share soup with our homebound. A special shout out goes to Crystal Tula for contributing more than 1 dozen quarts of fresh soup!!!

Again, thank you ALL so much for your generosity and time. We are very grateful.



GRACE RECYCLES:

Please flatten all cardboard boxes before putting them in the recycling bin. Also, all plastic, cans, bottles, jars should be rinsed and placed loosely **(not in trash bags)** in the bin. This will allow the maximum amount of material to be placed in the bin between monthly pickups. Thank you !

Use of Fellowship Hall: Please Note

This is a reminder that Stepping Stones uses Fellowship Hall at various times throughout their day. Stepping Stones is in session from 7:30-5:30 Monday to Friday. Access during those times **must** be coordinated with the Stepping Stones Director, Jessica Moran. Any planned activities should also be scheduled through the church office, by contacting Lynn Fasick. Thank you for your cooperation.



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS 2024



Poinsettias will be available for decoration of our Chancel. Orders are now being taken. The DEADLINE for ordering is Sunday, 12/8/24.

You may pick up your plant after the last Christmas Eve Service or the following Sunday. The plants will be tagged with your name. Regrettably, we are not able to deliver the Poinsettias to friends or shut-ins.

Please place your order form along with your check in the basket marked for Christmas Poinsettias in the Narthex. If you have any questions, please contact Kathy Stawasz 215-760-6297. Thank you.

Cost - \$8.25	Red – 1 Branched Poinsetti Qty		Pot Size 6"
	2 Branched Poinsettia <u>nite Combination</u>	8-12 Blooms Qty	An electron based and an and a second
In Memory of:	closed:		
• Website	k here if you do not want you		

Make checks payable to: Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

Grace Lutheran Church Rev Nancy M Raabe, Pastor 40 North Main Street Hatfield PA 19440-2905

GraceLutheranHatfield.org Office Phone 215.855.4676 Lynn Fasick, Office Administrator Graceassistant40@gmail.com Annette Dittman, Director of Youth Ministries Stepping Stones 215.368.2052 Jessica Moran, Director





December 1st -- Advent Family/Sanctuary Decorating December 7th -- Hatfield Community Christmas Tree Lighting December 8th -- Congregational Budget Meeting December 19th -- Longest Night Worship Service December 24th -- Christmas Eve Worship Services at 4:00pm, 6:30pm and 9:00pm December 29th -- ONE Worship Service at 10:30am

View our website by scanning this code



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