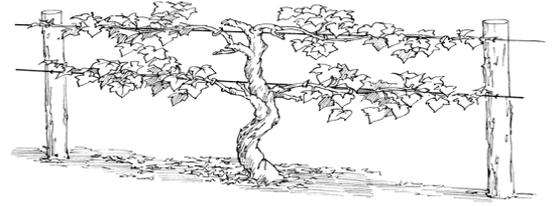


# **THE GRACE VINE**

## **GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**



*"I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit" John 15:5*

**DECEMBER 2019**

**Rev. Timothy Spence, Pastor**  
**Home Telephone: 304-905-6188 - [gracelutheranwheeling@comcast.net](mailto:gracelutheranwheeling@comcast.net)**

Called by God's grace, we commit to a life of worship, discipleship, and service in the name of Jesus Christ

### ***FROM THE PASTOR***

My old friend "Kazie" Kasekopf from my Wisconsin days called to chat the other day.

"They're at it again," he said.

"Who?" I asked.

"My congregations," he said. "Every year it's the same thing. We get ready for Advent and the first thing I hear is that 'Our pastor is so mean and so strict. He won't let us sing Christmas Carols until Christmas! The Presbyterians and the Church of God and the Methodists and the Baptists all get to sing Christmas Carols during Advent! Why aren't we allowed?'"

"They do get that it's Advent and that Advent is about getting ready, not celebrating, right?" I asked.

"Every year, the same conversation", he said. "I tell them that we don't sing Christmas Carols during Advent for the same reason we don't sing Easter hymns during Lent."

"How's that go over?" I asked.

"Nobody blinks an eye," he said. "I think the similarity is lost on them."

"What about the idea that Advent is about preparation – like ordering the cake and getting the decorations out and buying and wrapping the presents but not actually having the party until the day actually comes? After all, who eats the birthday cake and then has the birthday party four weeks later?" I asked. "Does anybody seem to understand that?"

"Not really, " old Kasekopf opined. "I tell them it's like saying we're going to sing "Happy Birthday" four weeks before the actual date of the celebration and the party but then actually having the party four weeks later. That would be weird, right?"

**16 Ridgecrest Road**  
**Wheeling, WV 26003**  
**Church Telephone: (304) 242-5830**  
**Sunday Morning Worship - 10:00 AM**

“What about the idea that Advent is about the waiting, the longing, the anticipation, like kids making out their Christmas lists of what they want but not actually getting the presents until Christmas. That’s what it was like for the people of God for centuries, wanting and waiting for the Messiah to come, but his not getting there until the right moment in time of God’s choosing? Do they get that Advent is supposed to be about living in the sense of wanting it to come and it not being here yet?”

“Nope,” he said, “Not a bit. Between the Hallmark Channel starting Christmas movies in July and showing them every week and the Christmas decorations going up in the drug store and Wal-Mart before Labor Day and everywhere you go playing Christmas Carols starting the day after Halloween everybody wants Christmas to be here now.”

“So Reinhold Niebuhr’s idea that Christians are a people apart who are ‘in the world but not of the world’ as Paul said, and that we are not to conform to this world like it says in Romans 12:2 doesn’t carry any weight?”

Not at all,” he said. “If the culture does it, it doesn’t matter what the church says. We just want to be like everybody else.”

“The difference between the secular celebration with Charles Dickens and “It’s a Wonderful Life” and new England Currier and Ives perfect White Christmases that never even mention Jesus is lost on them. It is possible that it’s okay to celebrate both a secular, seasonal holiday with all the trimmings in the culture’s time AND the birth of Jesus in the church’s time. But those are two different and distinct things. The possibility that we can celebrate both without confusing them never seems to cross most people’s minds.”

“Most people don’t see the difference,” he continued. “In spite of the number of ‘Keep Christ in Christmas’ pins and bumper stickers, the more subtle detail of noticing when the name of Jesus is spoken and when it’s not spoken is glossed over with the warm fuzziness of trying to create the perfect tree and finding just the right gift. Secular Christmas is more about being with family and love winning out and less about the Son of God leaving the heavenly realms and taking on human form and coming to earth to share our lives.”

“And while Christmas IS about God’s love for us, most of the time Jesus isn’t even mentioned. How many movies have you seen where the characters end up at church on Christmas Eve? Most of the time they save the family Christmas tree farm only to end up at a community party where the identity of the Country and Western star who’s been living with amnesia is revealed? Or they end up at a royal Christmas Eve ball where the prince realizes she’s really the one he’s in love with.”

“That is true,” I had to admit. “Getting people to accept that there are really two competing versions of Christmas and therefore two competing visions of Advent is difficult. It’s also hard for people to accept that they can celebrate both cultural Christmas and Church Advent but still keep them distinct.”

“Exactly!” he said. “It’s the same problem with celebrating the Twelve Days of Christmas. While everybody else is ripping down their decorations on December 26, for the church the party is just getting started and goes on until Epiphany on January 6.”

“Any ideas about how to help get the differences across to people?” I asked.

“Not a one,” he said. “I guess I’ll just have to just continue to be that mean pastor who won’t let his congregation sing Christmas Carols until Christmas is actually here, and take whatever lumps come with it.”

“I hear you Kazie,” I said. “I’m just lucky that my folks are coming around to that understanding and don’t fuss too much. But getting people to keep Advent and capture the longing that God’s people must have felt while they waited for all those centuries for the Messiah to come isn’t an easy thing to do.”

“No,” he admitted, “it’s not. But like the Psalmist says, “Wait on the Lord. The Lord will come and will not be slow.” (*Psalm 27:14 and Habakkuk 2:3*)

“Right,” I said. “Blessed Advent, Kasekopf. May God make our Advent sense of hope long, and our waiting for Christ’s arrival short!”

“Amen,” he said. “Come Lord Jesus! Blessed waiting!”

# ASK THE PASTOR

Question: I've been giving money for Jim Gallaher and Amelia, but somebody told me recently that all that money is not being kept but is going into your discretionary fund. Is that true?

Answer: WOW! This is how rumors get started, so I am REALLY glad you asked!

After Amelia was born the congregation set up what is known as the "Special Needs Benevolence Fund".

Money in that fund is held for special gifts for particular people or for general use. The money is invested in a Money Market account within the church's funds, and families can draw on that when they needed it by submitting a copy of a bill to the Treasurer or the Pastor.

The Fund consists of three parts: 1) Any money given for the Gallaher family is designated and held for the support of the Gallaher family. 2) Any money given for the DaGrava family is designated and held for the support of the DaGrava family. 3) Any gain in the fund (interest income) or any undesignated gifts (and so far there haven't been any) is held in the fund as a sort of "general" or undesignated fund for anyone else who might have a special need in the future OR could be used by either the Gallaher or DaGrava families to supplement their special needs. (Prior to the addition of the Gallaher family in that fund, all the interest was credited to the DaGrava family.)

I have an idea about how the rumor might have started. When you put money into the offering plate and designate it for the "Special Needs (or Special Needs Benevolence) Fund", the money gets deposited into the General Fund checking account with the rest of the Sunday morning offering, but it doesn't stay in the General Fund account. Periodically (on average every one to three months, depending on how much has come in) that money is transferred out to the Money Market account.

I can assure you that none of those gifts has EVER been in the Pastor's Discretionary account and ALL money designated to that fund is either already there waiting to be used when needed or is waiting to be transferred from checking into that account (right now that's about \$250, so we'll probably transfer it soon).

I hope this puts your mind at ease and know that those who benefit from your generosity are truly grateful!

And as always, thanks for asking!

Question: It always seems like such a rush to get the kids to Sunday School on the days we have birthday and anniversary celebration after church. Shouldn't we move Sunday School to before church to make that easier?

Answer: This is an ongoing debate both in the Learning Committee and Council, so I'm glad to get the chance to address it.

Since we've moved the time of Sunday School to after worship, we've seen about a 200% increase in Sunday School attendance from the kids and about 10% increase from the adults. Some of this is about more kids moving into Sunday School age, but a lot of it has to do with kids getting started in the morning and families being present at worship and staying for Sunday School.

We've been talking about this for several months and are working on how to address this so we can do both Christian Education and cake. One set of conversations devolved to the idea of cancelling Sunday School once a month in favor of cake – kind of a "Bible versus cake argument". But I think it's more complicated than that. The commitment we made to discipleship in our mission statement indicates that Christian Ed takes precedence over fellowship, and I think we need to give discipleship priority.

I've been working with Kim Kochy to find a way start the Birthday and Anniversary celebration as soon as the majority of folks are downstairs instead of waiting for everyone to arrive. (Folks usually want to talk to me and sometimes it's 25 after until I get down the stairs. Plus it takes a while for the worship leaders like choir and altar guild to get things put away.) Also, Kim has come up with the idea of making cupcakes that are more portable (and don't require china plates!) so that the kids (and adults) can "grab and go" to get to Sunday School more promptly.

I guess the only other thing we could add would be to suggest that those who are headed to adult or child/youth Sunday School be allowed to go through the line FIRST (AFTER those celebrating, of course) in order to get to class on time.

Getting everything to work smoothly takes time and effort from everyone, and the bugs are gradually getting worked out. So continue to be patient and as always, thanks for asking!

## ***BOOK SALE***

The Learning Committee will again be hosting a Book Sale just in time for Christmas. Copies of recommended books will be displayed after church on November 24 and December 1. The selection includes books for children and youth, family books, and devotional and study books for adults.

All of the books will be great for personal use or will make great gifts. Books can be ordered on either the 24<sup>th</sup> or the 1<sup>st</sup>, and orders must be paid for at the time they are placed.

Books orders will be placed with the various suppliers during the week of December 1 and are expected to be delivered no later than December 20. If you are looking for a particular topic or type of book, please speak to Pastor and he will try to get an appropriate title added to those books already available.

## ***MID-WEEK ADVENT SERVICES***

Plan now to attend mid-week services for Advent. Services will be held on December 4, 11, and 18. A light supper of soup, salad, and dessert will be served at 6:00 PM, followed by Holden Evening Prayer beginning at 7:00. You may come for dinner, worship, or both.

Volunteers are needed to help provide soup and dessert each week and to help make salad and set up and clean up. Those who are not able to cook are asked to consider a small donation each week to help with the meal.

Sign-up sheets will be available at the Welcome Desk in late November. Please help as you are able!

## ***STEWARDSHIP MINUTE***

Amount of water used PER PERSON in the average American home: 80 to 100 gallons

Number of gallons of water used by the church in an average month: 4,800

Weight of a gallon of water: 7 pounds

Average distance women in our Companion Synod of Madagascar have to walk to carry water each day: 5 miles each way (ten miles total)

## ***POINSETTIAS***

Once again the church will be decorated with poinsettias for Christmas Eve. Poinsettia order forms are located at the Welcome Desk. Price this year is \$7.50 each and you can choose between white and red.

Orders with payment must be in the office no later than Tuesday, December 10th.

# ***PROPERTY COMMITTEE***

Three members of the Congregation have agreed to serve on the Property Committee for the next year: Patrick Coughlan, Chris Schenkel and Lutz Albrecht; Lutz will be the liaison to the Church Council.

Patrick is employed by Wheeling Hospital as a Nuclear Medicine Technologist with 30 years of service. He worked his way through 4 years of college by serving on the maintenance crew, learning plumbing, electrical work, lock-smithing, heating and cooling, and carpentry. Patrick is a member of Gallowglass, a traditional Celtic ensemble. Patrick is a great fit for this Committee.

Chris is employed by the Wheeling Park Commission and has been with them for the past 39 years. His title is Director of Horticulture and Festival of Lights Maintenance. His department is involved with grounds maintenance and the Festival of Lights. He is also a great addition to this Committee.

Lutz is a retired executive from Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel and an Engineer by education.

The members of the committee are not responsible for making repairs or implementing projects themselves although, on occasion, they may undertake a project if their talent and time allows. Instead, the committee is charged with identifying projects, identifying individuals in the congregation with suitable talents, organizing the implementation of the work, and, where appropriate, making recommendations to the Council for approval of the work or identifying and recommending outside contractors.

Record keeping and identification of critical systems will be a major effort of the committee. For example, Patrick has volunteered to identify all heating/cooling thermostats in the building, which batteries are required, when batteries should be changed and, most important, programming the thermostats to match the use of the space.

Chris has volunteered to oversee a computer-generated maintenance follow-up system which will identify timely implementation of routine and special maintenance work such as annual roof inspections, filter changes, equipment lubrication, etc.

Lutz will establish a maintenance work order system, list capital improvement projects and identify members of the congregation with unique talents such as plumbing, painting, electrical, carpentry, etc. and their ability and willingness to help. Regarding the latter item, the Property Committee will be working with the Stewardship Committee to implement a time and talent survey to accomplish this. Volunteers should know that if they are asked to help it would be on a single project basis rather than being expected to work on an on-going basis. In addition, some projects will have to be contracted out simply because of code and/or insurance requirements.

The Property Committee plans to have monthly articles in the Newsletter explaining the various systems at work in the church. Hopefully this will be interesting to all. Those of you who are interested in the design and remodeling work of the church in 2015-2016 can pick up a pamphlet on this subject at the Information Desk titled "About the Design of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church".

Next month we will share with you the additional duties of the Property Committee and address the subject of ceiling fans in the Sanctuary: Why they run in the winter, why their speed varies, who controls them, etc.

# ***CHRISTMAS EVE***

Mark your calendar for our annual Christmas Eve worship service. As in the past, the service will begin at 8:00 PM. As is Grace's tradition, the service includes the singing of Christmas Carols and the traditional candle lighting during the Gospel reading as we recognize that the light of Christ is come into world and pushes back the darkness.

Invite your family, friends, and neighbors to join us for this very special worship service.

# **CHURCH WORDS**

This month we look at two related words: Lector and lectionary, and a third word, pericope.

We are familiar with the word lecture, which means to teach. In church usage, the one who teaches by reading the words of scripture is the lector (LEK-tore). Similarly, the assigned book from which a lector reads is the lectionary (LEK-shun-air-ee). So the people who read the scripture lessons on Sunday (or at other times) are officially “lectors”. Less commonly used, lectors can also refer to lay folks who read sermons in the absence of a pastor.

Less familiar to our ears is the word pericope (pear-IH-ko-pee or pay), which comes from a Latin word meaning, “ a piece cut out from”. The pericope for the day is the “piece cut out from” or passage selected or assigned from the longer Gospel (or other scripture book, like the Prophets or the Letters) that is assigned for the reading on a particular day. A number of area pastors (mostly Lutheran) gather each Tuesday morning for a Pericope Study Group to review the pericopes for the upcoming Sunday, which is why Pastor is usually not in the office on Tuesday morning.

Lectors are usually lay members of the congregation who can read well, clearly, and loudly. If you would like to volunteer to be a lector, please speak to Pastor.

# **CELEBRATE ST. ANDREW**

Saturday, November 30, is St. Andrew’s Day. Traditionally celebrated especially by people of Scotland and Presbyterians (Andrew is the patron Saint of Scotland and strongly linked to the Scottish Presbyterian Church) it is sometimes referred to as the “Reformation Day of the Reformed Church.

More importantly, in the Gospel stories Andrew is linked to those from outside Judaism who wish to connect with Jesus. Andrew is described as one of the first to follow Jesus, having found Jesus at his baptism while being one of John’s disciples, and then being invited by Jesus after the baptism to “come and see”. In John 12:21, Andrew’s request on behalf of some Greeks who want to meet Jesus is not met with an affirmation and invitation, but instead is met with a pronouncement by Jesus that, having been approached by those who recognize who he is from the Gentile world, it is now time to go to Jerusalem and fulfill his destiny.

Andrew’s ability to move between the two groups (Jews and Gentiles) is a sign of the missionary work that must be done for the church to grow.

Akin to Germans drinking German beer and singing German songs to celebrate Luther, St. Andrew’s Day is a chance for Scots (and some Irish) to bring out the bagpipes and kilts and have “a wee bit o’ fun”. We will transfer St. Andrew’s Day to December 1, which is also Advent 1, and combine the emphasis of waiting during Advent with the call to continued mission while we wait.

So bring out your best kilt or tartan and come to celebrate the work of waiting on December 1 as we combine St. Andrew and Advent.

# **PASTOR APPRECIATION**

Pastor would like to thank everyone for the good wishes, cards, calls, and gifts for Pastor Appreciation Month in October. All too often the little things that so many people do, especially pastors, go unnoticed, and we only hear the complainers. Even if we do it because it’s “just part of the job” or we don’t want anyone to notice. It’s always nice to be recognized and appreciated, so don’t forget to let others know they are appreciated for their ministries also! Again, thank you!

# ***HUGGING***

Art Schunn is remembered by many in this congregation as a "First Class Hugger". On the 7th anniversary of his death, December 18th, we wanted to share this poem and encourage everyone to continue to follow in his footsteps - Anita Schunn, Arleen & Bob Hawk

"Friends, I'm not a doctor, but I've got some very good news,  
I've got a new prescription for getting rid of the blues.

What you need is a great big hug from a relative, lover or friend,  
It may seem strange at first, but you'll feel better in the end.

Everybody needs hugging— child, woman or man,  
it gives you something your body needs and does it like nothing else can.

It warms your heart and touches something in you that's very rare,  
it makes you feel secure and gives you a feeling that someone cares.

Hugging is a two-way street, as you give what you shall receive,  
so fill your hugs with genuine love, don't fake it, don't deceive.

Every human being has a basic need to touch,  
so pass your hugs around generously, you just can't hug too much.

So make today a hugging day and hug the next person you see,  
and just in case I miss you, hug someone for me.

And I will do the very same and hug someone for you,  
till hugging spreads throughout the land, and no one's ever blue."

**However, remember that not everyone likes to be hugged, so always ask permission first!**

## ***THINGS TO REMEMBER/ONGOING ACTIVITIES***

### ***Cans for Watch***

Grace members are collecting aluminum cans for WATCH. They will crush, recycle, and use the proceeds for client events. Please bring them at any time, and place them in the large box behind the kitchen door.

### ***Riesbeck Gift Cards***

Riesbeck Gift Cards to benefit Thrivent are available from either Judith Myers or Tami Tysk.

### ***Game Day***

A free Game Day for December will be held on Thursday the 19th, between 11:00 AM and 3:00 PM. You can play our games or bring your own. For more information, call 304-233-2990 or 304-242-2632.

### ***Grace Guys***

The Grace Guys will not meet in December

# **POWER** **PRAYER**



## **PRAYER LIST**

**Ryan Deegan**  
**Henri Fontaine**  
**George Myers**  
**Stephanie Moore-Vetanze**  
**Andrew Lemasters**  
**Barbara Knollinger**  
**Jodi Ennis (Hunt)**  
**Dona'e Albert**  
**Nick Riggle**  
**Jim Gallaher & Family**  
**Carrie Sacco**

**Hines Rotriga**  
**Amelia DaGrava**  
**Thelma Moore**  
**Addison Lucas**  
**Bill Scholley**  
**Keith McMannis**  
**Susan Falbo**  
**Carolyn Polverini**  
**Jay Wallace**  
**Richard Chrisfield**  
**Kristin McGavitt**

**Betty Swartz**  
**David Ausdenmoore**  
**Melody Holiday**  
**Cindy Roshak**  
**Linda Porter**  
**Doris Schafer**  
**Dorothy Miller**  
**Zane Neuhardt**  
**Peggy Frazier**  
**Willow Hollingsworth**  
**Nancy Weeks**

## **ON MILITARY DUTY**

**Brian Coughlan**

**Casey Young**

**Parker Euri**

## **HOMEBOUND**

**Mabel Winesburg**  
218 Elm Crest Drive  
Wheeling, WV 26003

**Becky Frazier**  
55801 Conno-Mara Dr  
Bellaire, OH 43906

**Bertha & Robert Loth**  
1604 Waddell Court  
Durham, NC. 27703

**Debbie Hawkins**  
Peterson Rehabilitation Hospital  
20 Homestead Ave.  
Wheeling, WV 26003

**Chris Roshak**  
c/o Grace Lutheran Church  
16 Ridgecrest Road  
Wheeling, WV 26003

**Kitty Hagedorn**  
18 Willow Avenue  
Wheeling, WV 26003

**Eileen Hempelmann**  
207 Boggs Hill Road  
Wheeling, WV 26003

**Howard & Betty Shackelford**  
333 Dement Road  
Triadelphia, WV 26059

**Peggy Blatt**  
3 Hunter Avenue  
Wheeling, WV 26003

**Jim Gallaher**  
40 Suncrest Avenue  
Wheeling, WV 26003

## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Vicki Pennybacker	12/01		Kim Kochy	12/18
Diane Coughlan	12/01		Bonnie Treiber	12/18
William Strauch	12/04		Betty Shackelford	12/21
Michael Wallace	12/07		Harry Kettler Jr.	12/23
Robert McClure Jr.	12/09		Chad Grimes	12/24
Cameron Koehler	12/13		Christian Bell-Osinkosky	12/25
Chap Holbert	12/16		Bradley Weeks	12/25
Kathy Nelson	12/17		Joe Kochy	12/28

## GRACE COUNCIL 2019

<i>Nancy Weeks</i>	<i>Tami Gallaher</i>
<i>Lutz Albrecht</i>	<i>Kathy Sheller</i>
<i>Casey Young</i>	<i>Dennis Niess</i>
<i>Marjorie Wolf</i>	<i>Linda Dunnell</i>
<i>Diane "Dee" Coughlan</i>	



## DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Mike & Lynn Maguire	12/02
Edward & Adriana Wolf III	12/04
Gregory & Deborah Sgroi	12/18
Howard & Betty Shackelford	12/25
Andrew & Kathy Nelson	12/27
Ronald & Marcella Woloshan	12/29





# DECEMBER 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Worship 10:00 AM Fellowship 11:10 AM Sunday School 11:30 AM Fellowship Hall Reserved	2 Ohio County 4 H training in Luther Room and Meeting room all day Dance 5:00 PM Vocal Choir 6:30 PM	3	4 Advent Dinner 6:00 PM Prayer 7:00 PM	5 Strands of Comfort 10:00 AM Bell Choir 6:30 PM	6 Heritage Dance 6:00 PM	7 Fellowship Hall reserved for a Christmas party
8 Worship 10:00 AM Fellowship 11:10 AM Sunday School 11:30 AM	9 Dance 5:00 PM Vocal Choir 6:30 PM	10	11 Advent Dinner 6:00 PM Prayer 7:00 PM	12 Bell Choir 6:30 PM Red Cross Class 6:00 PM—8:00 PM	13 Heritage Dance 6:00 PM	14
15 Worship 10:00 AM Fellowship 11:10 AM Sunday School & Chil- dren's Choir 11:30 AM	16 Dance 5:00 PM Council Meeting 6:30 PM	17	18 Women of the ELCA Bible study 10:00 AM Advent Dinner 6:00 PM Prayer 7:00 PM Vocal Choir 7:30 PM	19 Strands of Comfort 10:00 AM Game Day 11:00 AM Bell Choir 6:30 PM	20 Heritage Dance 6:00 PM	21
22 Worship 10:00 AM Fellowship 11:10 AM Sunday School 11:30 AM	23 Dance 5:00 PM Vocal Choir 6:30 PM	24 <b>Christmas Eve Service 8:00 PM</b>	25 <b>Christmas Day</b> Office closed	26 Office closed	27 Office closed	28
29 Worship 10:00 AM Fellowship 11:10 AM Sunday School 11:30 AM	30 Office closed	31 Office closed	January 1 <b>New Year Day</b> Office closed	January 2 Office closed	January 3 Office closed	

**GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
16 RIDGECREST ROAD  
BETHLEHEM  
WHEELING WV 26003**

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

## **SAVE THE DATE!**

Mid-week services for Advent. Services will be held on **December 4, 11, and 18**. A light supper of soup, salad, and dessert will be served at 6:00 PM, followed by Holden Evening Prayer beginning at 7:00 PM. Join us for dinner, worship, or both!

Christmas Eve Service, Wednesday, December 24th at 8:00 PM. All are welcome, bring your family, friends and neighbors!

