

THE GRACE VINE

GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

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

JANUARY 2021

Rev. Timothy Spence, Pastor
Home Telephone: 304-905-6188 - gracelutheranwheeling@comcast.net

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

It wasn't the Christmas that we thought
The roads were bad
And congestion made the travelers hot
With rage and lack of patience

When they arrived (too late it seemed)
They found that out-of-towners had filled
The homes of friend and family alike
And all the hotels were full of strangers
Bedded down for the night

Until someone (they didn't remember who)
offered them a garden shed
Not much, (they said), but at least a roof
and a sort-of bed
With some blankets and a couple of cots
And it was better (was it not?)
Than sleeping outside in the cold

They could not even go to church
And so they huddled in their garden-shed perch.
There would be no candlelight, no "Silent Night",
No carols sung, or church bells rung.
And no poinsettias or festive flowers graced
The building towers all around
Or decorated gates and doors.

Instead the night was dark and cold
And only a small lamp shone weak and bold
On what could be seen in the shed where a baby cried
While his mother dreamed, exhausted,
From all that had been heard and done

Until a light shone like the sun
And (maybe) drunken revelers
came to their crowded door
With visions (so they said) of angels
And good news for both rich and poor
And celebration.

It was not what we all hoped to see
On Christmas Eve.
With music and flowers, and candle gleam
And carols sung as bells are rung to tell that
Christ is born!
All were missing from that scene.

But there in Bethlehem's garden shed
The best Christmas came that night.
No trumpet sounds or children's choir
No herald voice, no warming fire,
Would welcome Mary's new-born child,
The Son of God enthroned on hay
With sheep and cattle standing by

And strangers who came and wondered why
The news had come to them
And not to those who lived in towers all laced
With flowers and bright with warmth and song.

It wasn't the Christmas that we thought
But one that with fright and fatigue was fraught
Until the Son of God was born
And strangers came to a lowly shed
Where the King of Heaven made his bed

We look for carols and flowers and light
For bells and songs that take us to the height
Of all of that for which we long
In a world where so much seems so wrong

But Christmas is not what we think
It comes unadorned to form a link
Between the God who sets us free
And those who come on bended knee
To simple places where we see
The Christ Child.

Limited Activities to Continue

Although many of our activities have been suspended due to social distancing and limitations on gathering size, a few activities are will continuing.

- The Food Pantry is still distributing food for regular monthly support and for emergencies
- Strands of Comfort continues to meet with social distancing twice each month
- Sunday School for young children continues to meet for approximately 15 minutes immediately after worship. (The kids are SUPER about keeping their masks on and about social distancing (a six-foot round tablecloth is helping!))
- Council continues to meet with social distancing in place
- A limited number of Handbell Choir members continue to meet to practice for duets and quartets, continuing to enhance our worship with special music
- For now, Sunday worship continues with appropriate safety guidelines in place, and new methods of communicating are constantly being evaluated and adapted
- Work continues to get ready for the 2021 Rummage Sale
- Mid-week Advent services have continued

However:

- Committee meetings have been suspended
- Vocal choir and the full Handbell Choir practices have been suspended
- Adult and older youth Sunday School classes have been suspended
- Use of the Nursery has been restricted
- Use of the building by outside groups has been restricted. Some groups have made their own decision to suspend meetings or activities
- Mid-week Advent dinners have been cancelled
- Funeral Dinners and other social activities, such as Coffee Hour, have been suspended

As things continue to change and develop, restrictions may be added or dropped. However, with the arrival of the new vaccines next month and going forward, it is anticipated that Grace will be back to a full schedule of activities for the fall of 2021. Meanwhile, it is expected that activities will be added in the spring and summer as safety guidelines allow.

Please be patient. We are trying to continue to function as a community of faith while respecting the health needs of both the larger community and the congregation. If the experts are correct about how long it will take to vaccinate everyone and find the “next normal”, we are more than halfway through the pandemic.

But people have become careless or are not taking things seriously. We wanted the comfort of family and friends and traditions for Christmas and Thanksgiving. All that, combined with cold weather forcing people indoors together, means that we are facing the toughest few months of the entire pandemic.

Please be patient as your Congregation Council and other leaders continue to negotiate this unknown territory and work to put into place those policies and guidelines that will keep our members safe and healthy.

Christmas Eve Service

This year will be a different kind of Christmas celebration.

As a result of Covid-19 health precautions, we will not easily be able to have everyone who might want to come to a Christmas Eve service in the building. Rather than requiring people to make reservations to come to church or trying to schedule multiple services and hope the numbers work out, we have taken steps to allow as many people as want to come and even allow for the possibility for expanding attendance by increasing our use of electronic technology.

Instead of our traditional service, Christmas Eve at Grace this year will be “drive-in church”. The service will begin at 7:00 PM. You can sit in your car and listen to the service on our new broadcast system. You may participate by singing in your car. This way, everyone who wants to come may attend, and visitors can worship with us as well.

The service will be a modified *Service of Lessons and Carols* with the full service printed out in the bulletin. While most of the service will be audio only, there will be some visual aspects to the service. Therefore, we suggest you arrive early because there will be people directing how and where you should park so that cars can be arranged to make the most of the space in relation to how the service will be presented. Your offering may be given as you receive your bulletin and are given instructions as to where to park.

Unfortunately, the broadcast will not extend to everyone. FCC licensing requirements mean that we can only broadcast within 300 feet of the church, so you will not be able to receive the broadcast at your home. However, we will still record the service and post it on Facebook later.

There may not be candles and flowers this year, but there will be bells and lights and carols. And the heart of Christmas – that the Son of God has taken on human form and been born for us to save us from a sinful and broken world – will be at the heart of our Christmas Eve celebration.

Welcome to New Staff

Our secretary, Shirley Johnson, has taken semi-retirement and will be cutting her hours to Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9 to 12 (from 15 to 9 hours per week). Please note that this means there may not always be someone in the office on Tuesday and Thursday mornings when you call.

At the same time, as of December 16 Ms. Jolinda Steiner has been hired as our new bookkeeper. Jolinda will work six to eight hours each month and will take over many of the financial duties that had previously been part of Shirley’s position. Her work schedule will vary as she is employed full-time at the Wheeling Parks Commission and the Oglebay Foundation.

We congratulate Shirley on her “semi” retirement and welcome Jolinda to our staff.



A Christmas Reflection From Bishop Riegel

Much of our anxiety surrounding Christmas . . . is not actually over the virus; it is over our traditions. If we think about this as Lutherans, we will admit that most of our traditions surrounding Christmas are *adiaphora*, that is, nonessentials in that God does not command them, and they do not contribute to our salvation.

Were we to be deprived of trees, brass choirs, poinsettias, and even the candlelight singing of Silent Night, Christ would still be the Son of God, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, and the incarnation of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity would still be a fact. Indeed, the Holy Spirit would still be free to work faith in those who hear the Gospel even if that Gospel were whispered through a mask, unaccompanied by a single ornament.

This Christmas may not be like other Christmases. Some of our practices may be eliminated, limited, or performed in different ways, but most of the Christmas practices most affected by pandemical constraints have never been the essentials of the true faith. They have been good and pleasant adornment but not the true adornment of the church.

In the midst of our anxieties, we should remember the teaching of our Lutheran Confessions: The true adornment of the churches is godly, useful, and clear doctrine, the devout use of the sacraments, ardent prayer, and the like. Candles, golden vessels, poinsettias, trees, mangers, and similar adornments are appropriate, but they are not the distinctive adornment of the Church. (Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXIV:51).

Separating what is truly essential from what merely appears to be essential is the key to reducing the anxiety that may accompany Christmas planning this year. What is more: We might just discover what really matters!

The Rev. Bishop Matthew Riegel



Offering Envelopes

Thanks to those who have come to the office to pick up their offering envelope or who have picked them up at worship.

For the rest of the congregation, boxes of offering envelopes will be mailed later this month.

Thank you all for your continued good stewardship and faithful giving while we continue to work our way through the Covid-19 pandemic.



Banners Wanted

The late Lois Schunn was an excellent textile craftsperson and is responsible for most of the banners decorating the Education Wing of the church. The banners are simply made, mostly with felt and glue, but the care and creative craftspersonship is what sets them apart.

After the renovations when we first put up the banners, it was noted that there were almost enough banners to have a whole series of banners celebrating and educating about the Church Year. However, a few pieces are missing.

We are looking for volunteers to finish the series. Missing are: Communion, Ash Wednesday, Pentecost season, Lent, and Good Friday.

Pastor and Peggy Blatt have several books with banner designs, and there are a couple in the church library as well. If you would like to work on the missing banners by yourself or with a small group in order to complete this series, please contact Pastor.

How the Coronavirus Spreads

Even though there is now a vaccine to fight against Covid-19, it will be several months (probably not until late summer or fall) before enough vaccine is produced and enough people are vaccinated for things to form a new, post-pandemic normal.

Meanwhile, your congregational leaders will continue to monitor health guidelines and implement (or ease) restrictions as we are advised by government and health officials.

Covid-19 is an air-borne virus that exists in the droplets that are in your breath. It is spread when you breath in (or out) through your nose or mouth. Since it is winter, you can try this experiment when you are outside alone to understand how Covid-19 spreads:

When the temperature is below 35, go outside and take a deep breath. Then breath out through your mouth. Notice how far the cloud of vapor goes. That's how Covid spreads.

To understand how masks work, put your scarf on (make sure it covers both your nose and mouth) and do the same thing. Notice how far the cloud of vapor goes. That is how masks help stop the spread of the virus.

Thank you

The family of Don Taylor would like to thank you for the many cards, phone calls, and gestures of kindness. Your comforting words and support were a blessing we needed at this sad time.



POWER *of* **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
Linda Dunnell
Bob McDonald
Art Henry
Sean Datson
Don Taylor Family

Hines Rotriga
Amelia DaGrava
Thelma Moore
Addison Lucas
Bill Scholley
Keith McMannis
Susan Falbo
Carolyn Polverini
Nettie McClure
Richard Chrisfield
Kristin McGavitt
Sister Mary
Jerry Findel
Brian Lester
Mike Speaker

Betty Swartz
David Ausdenmoore
Becky Frazier
Cindy Roshak
Linda Porter
Doris Schafer
Dorothy Miller
Zane Neuhardt
Peggy Frazier
Willow Hollingsworth
Minnie Taylor
Shari Sedilko
Karen Walker
Coy Davenport

ON MILITARY DUTY

Brian Coughlan

Casey Young

Parker Euri

HOMEBOUND

Dorothy Cox
Good Shepherd Nursing Home
Room 214
159 Edginton Lane
Wheeling, WV. 26003

Becky Frazier
55801 Conno-Mara Dr
Bellaire, OH 43906
Wheeling, WV 26003

Bertha & Robert Loth
c/o Grace Lutheran Church
16 Ridgecrest Road
Wheeling, WV. 26003

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

Kitty Hagedorn
18 Willow Avenue
Wheeling, WV 26003

Chris Roshak
River Park Hospital
1230 6th Avenue
Huntington, WV. 25701

Eileen Hempelmann
207 Boggs Hill Road
Wheeling, WV 26003

Howard & Betty Shackelford
333 Dement Road
Triadelphia, WV 26059



GRACE COUNCIL 2021

<i>Cindy Koshak</i>	<i>January 1</i>
<i>Allison Koehler</i>	<i>January 1</i>
<i>Jeanie Deem</i>	<i>January 2</i>
<i>Thomas Maquire</i>	<i>January 2</i>
<i>Gina Stees</i>	<i>January 6</i>
<i>Katrina Smith</i>	<i>January 7</i>
<i>Dorothy Cox</i>	<i>January 9</i>
<i>Ed Wolf III</i>	<i>January 12</i>
<i>Kaitlyn Wallace</i>	<i>January 13</i>
<i>Elizabeth Wolf</i>	<i>January 15</i>
<i>Adam Wolf</i>	<i>January 17</i>
<i>Sharon VanDam</i>	<i>January 19</i>
<i>Abigail Keller</i>	<i>January 20</i>
<i>Robert Miller</i>	<i>January 22</i>
<i>Steve Sedilko</i>	<i>January 23</i>
<i>Ronald Johnston</i>	<i>January 28</i>
<i>Amelia DaGrava</i>	<i>January 30</i>
<i>Linda Rush</i>	<i>January 30</i>

Nancy Weeks

Lutz Albrecht

Pat Franklin

Linda Dunnell

Tami Tysk

Diane "Dee" Coughlan

Brian Crawford

Dennis Niess

Vicki Gilmore



Doug & Carolyn Thompson January 8

**happy
Birthday**

JANUARY 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 New Year's Day	2
3 Worship 10:00 AM 2nd Sunday of Christmas	4 Dance 5:00 PM	5 Strands of Comfort 4:30 PM	6 Handbell Practice 9:30 AM	7 Handbell Practice 9:30 AM	8	9
10 Worship 10:00 AM Baptism of our Lord	11 Dance 5:00 PM	12	13 Handbell Practice 9:30 AM	14 Handbell Practice 9:30 AM	15	16
17 Worship 10:00 AM 2nd Sunday after Epiphany	18 Dance 5:00 PM Council Meeting 6:30 PM Martin Luther King Jr Day	19 Strands of Comfort 4:30 PM	20 Handbell Practice 9:30 AM	21	22	23
24 Worship 10:00 AM 3rd Sunday after Epiphany	25 Dance 5:00 PM	26	27 Handbell Practice 9:30 AM	28	29	30
31 Worship 10:00 AM 4th Sunday after Epiphany						

WORSHIP LEADERS JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2021

Date	Acolyte	Altar Guild	Bread	Crucifer	Greeters
January 3, 2021		Elaine Sediiko			
January 10, 2021		Elaine Sediiko			
January 17, 2021		Elaine Sediiko			
January 24, 2021		Elaine Sediiko			
January 31, 2021		Elaine Sediiko			
February 7, 2021		Tami Tysk			
February 14, 2021		Tami Tysk			
February 21, 2021		Tami Tysk			
February 28, 2021		Tami Tysk			
	Welcome Desk	Lector	PA/Sound	Prayer Leader	Ushers
January 3, 2021		Elaine Sediiko	Volunteer	Pat Franklin	Buffy & Chris Schenkel
January 10, 2021		Tami Tysk	Volunteer	Pastor Spence	Buffy & Chris Schenkel
January 17, 2021		Nancy Weeks	Volunteer	Nancy Weeks	Buffy & Chris Schenkel
January 24, 2021		Marcie Woloshan	Volunteer	Lutz Albrecht	Buffy & Chris Schenkel
January 31, 2021		Lutz Albrecht	Volunteer	Pat Franklin	Buffy & Chris Schenkel
February 7, 2021		Brian Crawford		Pastor Spence	Joe Kochy, Bill Stees & Jay Wallace
February 14, 2021		Jeanie Deem		Nancy Weeks	Joe Kochy, Bill Stees & Jay Wallace
February 21, 2021		Pat Franklin		Lutz Albrecht	Joe Kochy, Bill Stees & Jay Wallace
February 28, 2021		Kim Kochy		Pat Franklin	Joe Kochy, Bill Stees & Jay Wallace
	Flowers for	Flowers given by	Counters	Assisting Minister	NOTES
January 3, 2021			Steve & Elaine Sediiko	Don McNabb	
January 10, 2021			Steve & Elaine Sediiko	Tami Tysk	
January 17, 2021			Steve & Elaine Sediiko	Nancy Weeks	
January 24, 2021			Steve & Elaine Sediiko	Marcie Woloshan	
January 31, 2021			Steve & Elaine Sediiko	Brian Crawford	
February 7, 2021				Pat Franklin	
February 14, 2021				Shawn Gilmore	
February 21, 2021				Vickie Gilmore	
February 28, 2021				Don McNabb	

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

SAVE THE DATE!

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.

