

Grace Notes



December brings us to the beginning of a new Church Year with the season of Advent. Along with Lent, Advent is one of the two penitential and preparatory seasons of our life together in the Church. The Scripture readings we hear and the hymns we sing during this time are meant to draw us in repentance and faith to receive the coming of our Lord Jesus. However, the question might be asked, "Which coming of Jesus does Advent have in mind?" This is a good question, one that we can answer three ways.

First, and perhaps most obviously, the season of Advent prepares us for the coming of Jesus in our human flesh on Christmas. Our midweek services will take us through the familiar account from Luke 1 concerning the events leading up to Jesus' birth in Bethlehem. We will hear how Zechariah doubted that his barren wife Elizabeth would have a son, despite Gabriel's faithful message. We will hear how Mary believed Gabriel's announcement concerning the miraculous birth of the Son of God from her virgin womb. Our hearts will know the same joy that John knew as he leaped in his mother's womb upon the entrance of the Savior in His mother's womb. We will sing the Magnificat with Mary. We will look with wonder and awe and faith along with Zechariah when his son is finally born. These texts all serve to heighten our anticipation of the marvel of Christmas. Spending the season of Advent with a penitential focus will prepare us to celebrate God's birth at Christmas with even greater joy.

Second, the season of Advent prepares us for the coming of Jesus right now in His Word and Sacraments. Advent isn't simply a reenactment of the time before Jesus' birth. Advent invites us to consider how Jesus comes to us right now as the One who was crucified and raised to win our salvation from sin, death, and the devil. You'll notice that the majority of the Gospel readings we hear on the Sundays in Advent actually occur chronologically after Jesus' birth. We'll watch as Jesus rides into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. We'll hear John the Baptizer call us to repentance for our sins. In these ways, we are prepared to receive

Jesus as He comes to us right now. His is the Word of Absolution that is spoken to us each Sunday morning. His is the Body and Blood we receive into our mouths for our forgiveness each week. The penitential focus of Advent heightens our joy to receive Jesus' coming to us with His gifts each Sunday morning.

Third, the season of Advent prepares us for the coming of Jesus on the Last Day. Many of the themes that filled our hearts and minds during the Sundays that concluded the previous Church Year continue straight into the new Church Year. The Old Testament reading for the First Sunday in Advent this year is from Isaiah 64; it begins with this prayer: "Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down!" The Collect for that same Sunday invites us to pray similarly: "Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come, that by Your protection we may be rescued from the threatening perils of our sins and saved by Your mighty deliverance." Such readings and prayers put our attention once again on the Last Day, when our Lord comes to raise us from the grave and give us the fullness of eternal life in body and soul with Him. The penitential focus of Advent prepares us to receive Him on that Day with great joy as He takes us to our eternal home.

In these three ways, the season of Advent sets our eyes on the coming of Jesus so that we would receive Him with great joy as our only Savior. Our prayer remains, now and always: "Come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly!"

In Christ,
Pastor Appel

December 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 5:30pm- Youth Confirmation 7pm- Advent Service	3 6pm LWML 	4 Pastor Away- Family Day	5
6 8:30am Worship/Communion 10am Worship/Communion 11am-Family Bible Study	7 7pm Elders  Elders Meeting	8 9am Pastor Circuit Mtg	9 5:30pm- Youth Confirmation 7pm- Advent Service	10	11 Pastor Away- Family Day	12
13 8:30am Worship/Communion 10am Worship/Communion 11am-Family Bible Study	14 6pm- GLLC Meeting	15	16 5:30pm- Youth Confirmation 7pm- Advent Service	17	18 Pastor Away- Family Day	19
20 8:30am Worship/Communion 10am Worship/Communion 11am-Family Bible Study	21 6pm- GLLC Meeting	22 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE/NOON  DEADLINE: Newsletter Articles	23	24 7pm-Christmas Eve Worship	25 9am- Christmas Day Worship	26
27 8:30am Worship/Communion 10am Worship/Communion 11am-Family Bible Study	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve		

Grace Lutheran Church

308 Byrne Street
Smithville, TX 78957
Office Phone: (512) 237-2108
Fax Line: (512) 237-2832

Email address: gracelutheransmithville@gmail.com
Web Site: www.glcs.org

Sunday School 8:45 AM
Midweek Classes 8:45 AM
Worship Service 10:00 AM

Elder(s): C. Johannessen
Jack Page
Ushers: Davey Kadlecek
Brad Zimmerhanzel
Trustees Ronnie Pietsch
Colby Zimmerhanzel
Allan Riddle

Organist(s):
June Parker
Esther Wolff
Kim Appel
Dec. Altar Guild:
Linda Read
Frances Mynar



As of, November 24th, 2020

Name	Balance
Prosperity Checking Acct	60,440.37
CEF-General	2,445.55
CEF-Land/Youth	12,307.36
CEF Scholarship	12,459.08
CEF Property Loan	115,343.86
Legacy Deo	9,412.53
Total Dedicated Funds	24,691.66
General Fund Balance	35,748.71

Grace Lutheran Learning Center

401 Wilkes Street
Smithville, TX 78957
Office Phone: 512-360-2800
Fax Number: 512-237-5990

Email address: gracelutheranlearn@att.net

We now accept CCMS enrollment

Please feel free to put old or unused toys in our box located in the Narthex

If your birthday or anniversary does not appear correctly, please contact the church office so we can correct our files. Thank you.

Pastor Timothy Appel

If you need to contact him, his email address is: timothyappel@gmail.com and his home phone number is 512-237-9664, or contact our Office at 512-237-2108. If you are not able to reach either number and it is an emergency, contact your Elder. (Elders list on bulletin board by the Office)

CHURCH OFFICE

Normal hours are 9 to 2 Mon. – Fri. If you need any help from the office i.e., copying documents, record information, info to be put in the bulletin and/or newsletter, etc., please feel free to stop by, call, etc. We are there to provide you with whatever you need from the church office. You may also leave a note in the Secretary's box in the Narthex, and we will get back with you as soon as possible. Please let us know if you have any questions or suggestions.



In the Hospital

If you are admitted to the hospital, I would like to visit you in order to share God's Word and share a prayer with you in that difficult time. As you are able please let the church office know or ask the hospital to call the church office so that I can best minister to you.
Pastor Appel



There is a plastic container in the Narthex for collection of **used bulletins & white printed papers** to be recycled at the Smithville Recycling facility. If there are any questions please ask Katie or John Stelling for info

KFUO Bible Study Resources



During this time where there continues to be no in-person Bible study at Grace, please make use of the fantastic resources for growth in your Christian faith produced by the LCMS radio station, KFUO (www.kfu.org). Their variety

of programs will provide something of value to every person who listens. Of particular interest for Grace, every weekday morning at 8 AM, you can hear Pastor Appel host the Bible study, *Sharper Iron*, with guest pastors from around the country. If you can't catch the show live, you can listen to archived episodes at www.kfu.org/category/sharper-iron/.



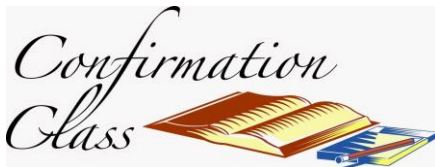
Dec. 2	Brad & Donna Zimmerhanel
Dec. 11	Daniel & Shelly Robinson
Dec. 18	June & Dennis Parker
	Rowan & Nora James
Dec. 30	John & Cheryl Moore
Dec. 31	Gene & Melissa Brown
	Vince & Jeanie Kaiser

Wishing these Friends a Happy Birthday! from your "Grace" family

If your birthday or anniversary does not appear correctly, please contact the church office so we can correct our files. Thank you.



Thank you to all our donors and shoppers. We support non profit agencies in Smithville. The store will be closed December 20th through January 4th. Grace is scheduled to work the week of January 9th to 16th. Donations continue to be accepted on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 10 to 2.



Youth Confirmation Classes

Our 7th and 8th grade youth confirmation students and parents meet each week for in-depth instruction concerning what Lutherans believe, teach, and confess according to God's Word. Class meets from 5:30-6:30 each Wednesday evening, making use of the necessary space in the parish hall to allow us to distance as effectively as possible. ***Please keep these youth and their parents in your prayers, that their faith in Christ would grow during their time in God's Word.***



Dec. 1	Joe Ray (Bubba) Bennight
Dec. 3	Caren Hannusch
	Dorwin (Blackie) Wallace
Dec. 5	Robert Vinklarek
Dec. 6	Annie Mae Rohde
	John Anderson
Dec. 7	Amber Hurst
Dec. 8	Lisa Stem
Dec. 12	Joshua Zimmerhanel
Dec. 15	Betty Flora
Dec. 17	Robert Nitsche
Dec. 18	Allan Hurst
	Stephanie Schwall
Dec. 19	Sharon Hancock
	Gracie Harmon
Dec. 21	Nicole Claiborne
Dec. 23	Charles Knippa
Dec. 24	Noah Appel
	Gertrude Davis
Dec. 25	Corey Macks
	Brody Taylor
Dec. 26	Heather McNeil
Dec. 28	Jack Page
	Kyle Pietsch

Family Sunday School

Continuing at least through the end of 2020, Grace is having a family Sunday school class. This class is intended for anyone and everyone; whether you are single or married or have lots of kids or have no kids, you are welcome to join us to learn God's Word together. We start each week about 11:10 am, or as quickly as we are able after the 10:00 am service ends (if you attend the 8:30 am service, plan to come back and start gathering in the parish hall at 11:00 am). Tables are spaced appropriately throughout the parish hall, with one family per table. Pastor introduces a new Bible story each week, and our learning includes both activities done as individual families and as a large group. We also include a hymn and a craft each week. We finish about 11:45 am. Please join us to learn God's Word together as families and as a congregation!





Dear Members of Grace Lutheran Church,

Please join us for Sunday School each Sunday around 11:00, and see what enjoyment everyone is getting out of this Christian gathering. We are open to suggestions and concerns anyone may have.

We are still hear to answer any questions you may have about Sunday School or the Christian Education of our Youth.

Our Board members for this year are: Charlie Johannessen, Toni Ann Kadlecek, Kathy Kasper, Mary Lou Oliver, Melissa Brown, June Parker, Barb Johannessen and the Sunday School Superintendent is Donna Zimmerhanzel. Please feel free to contact any of us at any time if you have questions.

May God Bless all of you.

Respectfully,

Barb Johannessen



Advent Midweek & Christmas Schedule

Wednesday Dec. 2, 2020	Advent Worship 7:00 pm Theme: John's Birth Announced and Doubted
Wednesday Dec. 9, 2020	Advent Worship 7:00 pm Theme: Jesus' Birth Announced and Believed
Wednesday Dec. 16, 2020	Advent Worship 7:00 pm Theme: John's Birth Brings Hope and Joy
Thursday Dec. 24, 2020	7:00 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service of Scripture and Carols
Friday Dec. 25, 2020	9:00 am The Nativity of Our Lord Festival Worship with Holy Communion

Advent Midweek Offerings

During our Advent midweek services on December 2, 9, and 16, our offerings will go to support the mission work of the Lord in three places: our Learning Center, Faith Lutheran High School, and pastoral education costs at Zion Lutheran Church in Schulenburg. Due to the ongoing pandemic, we will not have soup suppers this year, but we will still gather each Wednesday to be fed by the Word of the Lord and sing His praises in preparation for His coming. Please join us!

Christmas Eve Worship

Christmas Eve is one of the most wonderful services of the entire Church Year. We have great joy to experience the awe and wonder that God has been born to be our Savior. Knowing that Christmas Even worship often draws more people than are typically present on a Sunday morning, this service has been a topic of conversation at recent meetings of the Board of Elders. After these conversations, the current plan is to have one service at 7:00 PM on Christmas Eve. We will continue to observe appropriate distancing guidelines throughout the sanctuary, as we have done throughout the pandemic. In order to accommodate a potentially larger number of people than most Sunday mornings, those who come in person will also be seated in the balcony and in the parish hall, as needed. This is the *current* plan; it is subject to change according to the state of the pandemic as Christmas Eve draws closer. Any changes will be communicated as broadly as possible as soon as they are made.



FAITH LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL OF CENTRAL TEXAS

Faith Lutheran High School of Central Texas seeks to engage young adults in a Christ-centered environment where faith and knowledge grow as one.

HOME OF THE FALCONS!

Accreditation Visit

The FLHS had a very successful accreditation visit on November 8th - 10th. FLHS has been recommended for accreditation in good standing, with no major deficiencies. Praise the Lord for the wonderful blessings He continues to bestow on FLHS.

The visiting team was able to identify some major strengths of FLHS, some are noted below:

- The faculty of FLHS are intentional about creating and fostering a culture and climate that exemplifies the mission and ministry of the school.
- The variety of course offerings surpasses the expectation for a school of this size.
- The faculty of FLHS have genuine care and concern for the students and each other, which creates a positive, supportive family atmosphere.
- FLHS does an excellent job of offering struggling students opportunities for additional academic support through 1:1 instruction, homework support, and Power Hour.

"Faith at Christmas" Program

FLHS students will present a Christmas concert, "Faith at Christmas," on Tuesday, December 8th at 7:00 pm at FLHS. Program will include a collection of choir pieces, handbell pieces, hymns, scripture readings and more. Refreshments will be served following the program. Masks are required for those in attendance. Please join us!!!

*This event will also be live streamed on Facebook, for those who would prefer to view the sounds of Christmas from home.

Shadow Days

Shadow days are a great opportunity for prospective students to follow us for a day and experience what FLHS is all about. Parents, call us at (979) 242-2889 today to set up a shadow day for your child.

Scholarship Program

Have you ever had this thought? "Faith Lutheran High School sounds great, but my family can't afford it." We firmly believe that EVERY family desiring a Christ-centered education for their children should have the opportunity to attend FLHS. We have a Tuition Scholarship Program with funds available, and EVERY family who applies (through TADS) will receive some assistance. We'll do everything in our power to make sure that money isn't the reason you don't choose FLHS.

Raffle Items

The Spring Raffle is just around the corner. The Board of Directors is currently looking for valuable items or monetary donations to be used in the raffle. Please contact Nikki Kueck if you have something to donate! Thank you!

Junior High Game Night

Our November 7th and 8th grade game night was postponed due to the uptick in Covid cases in our area. Watch school newsletters, bulletin inserts and flyers from your school with information on when this will be rescheduled in the coming weeks.

Thank you!

There have been so many people, organizations, groups and churches who have contributed to the success and growth of FLHS. Thank you, on behalf of the students who will be instilled with wisdom as they become faithful leaders tomorrow, for your generous support. THANK YOU!!



Ongoing Worship Services at Grace

In order to continue to receive the gifts of God in the Divine Service together at Grace, all the while protecting the physical health of our neighbors during this time of pandemic, the following plan has been put in place by our elders for the coming weeks:

- Two worship services will be offered each Sunday, one at 8:30 AM and one at 10:00 AM. Each week, you will need to sign up for your desired service ahead of time, either by using the online tool sent by e-mail and posted on Facebook or by calling the church office.
- We will practice social distancing throughout the sanctuary. We will skip every other pew in the first service, and then switch the pews for the second. Households will sit together, leaving at least 6 feet of space between other households.
- Families will be ushered forward one at a time for the distribution of the Sacrament. Rather than kneeling at the rail, this will take place immediately in front of the chancel, in a method similar to what we use during our service before the bazaar. Individual cups and the chalice will both continue to be offered; the purificator, used to wipe the chalice, will be soaked in a neutral spirit with extremely high alcohol content in order to sanitize the chalice between communicants
- Commonly touched surfaces will be sanitized between services.
- The assisting elder and I will wear masks during the distribution of the Sacrament. In accordance with current city and state ordinances, those who come to in-person worship should wear a mask or other face covering.
- Previously implemented health-conscious practices will be continued. The service will be printed fully in bulletin so you will not need to use the hymnal. We will forgo the passing of offering plates, the sharing of the peace, and handshakes during greeting. Please enter the church through the doors that open to the parking lot (these will be held open for you), and avoid going into the parish hall. We will also avoid congregating in the narthex.

Opportunities to Receive God's Gifts Individually

For those who are not yet attending in-person worship, opportunities to receive the gifts of God through other means continue to be available. Please be in touch with me to let me know how I can deliver these gifts of God to you. Even in the midst of a pandemic, no Christian should go without God's gifts in Word and Sacrament. Options include, but are not limited to:



- Live stream the 10:00 AM service on our Facebook page
- Individual appointment to receive Jesus' Body and Blood at Grace
- Socially distant outdoor home visit to receive Jesus' Body and Blood

This offer is made in earnest. ***You are not imposing on my time by requesting this of me; this is precisely why God has given time to me.*** Please let me know how I can best serve you in Christ's name during this time! –Pastor Appel

Supplies for Increased Gatherings

As Grace gathers together for worship again, it is important that we are able to prepare our facilities properly with appropriate cleaning supplies. We do not want to hoard these materials; we only want to make sure we have what is needed. The items we need most are disinfecting wipes, disinfecting spray, and hand sanitizer. If you are able to donate one of these items, it is greatly appreciated. They can be left on one of the benches outside of the parish hall during normal office hours (9 AM-2 PM, Tuesday-Friday); call the office to let us know, and items will be brought inside. Although we know these items are hard to find right now, we hope that everyone in the congregation looking for them will help us have the items that we need. Thank you for supporting Grace in this way!





LWML

Lutheran Women *in Mission*

UPCOMING:

Dec. 2nd
Parish Hall Tree
Trimming

Dec. 3rd
Regular Meeting-
bring snacks

We welcome you to join us in “Serving the Lord with Gladness.” Please contact any LWML member or Sharon Reinberg at 512-923-8222 to learn more or go to www.lwml.org or www.lwmltxdist.org to read about the mission and great history of LWML.

Grace LWML Mission Project: LWR Shipping Fund and Towers Nursing Home

Delivered 66 quilts and 50 school kits on November 7th.

LWML TEXAS DISTRICT GRANT BULLETIN BYTES:

- Lutheran Student Center
Improvements-Lubbock - \$20,000

Loving Father, the purpose of the Lutheran Student Center is to develop Christian leaders for the kingdom of Christ both now and in the future. We pray that the repair and updates to the building will encourage the students to utilize the facilities and encourage their growth in their Christian faith. Strengthen those who minister to them as they serve as faithful witnesses for You. We pray that the students will be blessed and grow in their Christian faith. In the precious name of Jesus, we pray. Amen

Donations to the large Mite Box in the Narthex are joyfully accepted.

National Mission Grant Bulletin Bytes:

-God’s Word Changes Everything-Lutheran Bible Translators (\$95,000)

Martin Luther wrote, “I wish that this book alone, in all languages, would live in the hands, eyes, ears, and hearts of all people.” When people have God’s Word, it changes their lives in ways they couldn’t imagine. Lutheran Bible Translators is training people from churches in Ethiopia and Tanzania to translate the Bible into their own languages as a part of seminary training. This will be four-year project with 15 trainees working each year. The funds will be used to equip pastors and lay leaders in the translation of God’s Word in the numerous local dialects for the benefit of their Tanzanian and Ethiopian people in their everyday worship.



The Widow’s Mite --- And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him and said to them, “Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.” Mark 12:42-44 ESV

Read Through the Bible in 2020

Grace Lutheran Church, Smithville, TX

“God’s Word is our great heritage and shall be ours forever!” Continue your daily Bible reading during 2020. God’s blessings for you in His Word abound! *(Note: On days listed as “OFF,” consider re-reading something from earlier in the week or making up a day that you might have missed.)*

Readings for the Month of December

December 1	Proverbs 29	Psalms 133-136
December 2	OFF	
December 3	Hebrews 13	Daniel 10-12
December 4	II Peter 1	Hosea 1-4
December 5	II Peter 2-3	Hosea 5-10
December 6	Jude	Hosea 11-14
December 7	Revelation 1-2	Joel 1-3
December 8	Proverbs 30:1-10	Psalms 137-139
December 9	OFF	
December 10	Revelation 3	Amos 1-4
December 11	Revelation 4-5	Amos 5-9
December 12	Revelation 6-7	Obadiah
December 13	Revelation 8-9	Micah 1-3
December 14	Revelation 10-11	Micah 4-7
December 15	Proverbs 30:11-23	Psalms 140-143
December 16	OFF	
December 17	Revelation 12	Nahum 1-3
December 18	Revelation 13-14	Habakkuk 1-3
December 19	Revelation 15-16	Zephaniah 1-3
December 20	Revelation 17-18	Haggai 1-2
December 21	Revelation 19	Zechariah 1-8
December 22	Proverbs 30:24-33	Psalms 144-147
December 23	OFF	
December 24	Revelation 20-21	Zechariah 9-14
December 25	Revelation 22	Malachi 1-4
December 26	James 1-2	Jonah 1-4
December 27	James 3	Esther 1-4
December 28	James 4-5	Esther 5-10
December 29	Proverbs 31	Psalms 148-150
December 30	OFF	
December 31	Re-read Galatians	