

Grace Notes



Having journeyed through the Lord's Prayer for several months, our monthly newsletter consideration of God's gift of prayer turns now to the Psalms. The Psalter has often been called the hymnal or the prayer book of the Bible. Of all the places in Holy Scripture that teach us to pray, the Psalter stands out as a bright shining light. For that reason, we'll be looking through this part of God's Word for several months in order to continue to learn how to pray.

This may seem strange, but I'd like to start this month in Psalm 117. We'll pick up other Psalms in the coming months, but I want to begin in Psalm 117 for two reasons. First, Psalm 117 is the shortest of all the Psalms, making it very accessible and easier to memorize. (Here's your challenge to do just that over the course of December!) Second, Psalm 117 is a psalm of praise, which seems particularly fitting during this month in which we celebrate God's birth at Christmas. Here is the text of Psalm 117:

*Praise the LORD, all nations!
Extol him, all peoples!
For great is his steadfast love toward us,
and the faithfulness of the LORD endures
forever. Praise the LORD!*

Though this prayer is short and simple, God has great gifts for us here. First, this prayer stands as an excellent teaching in a mode of prayer that sometimes we neglect, the prayer of praise. Our prayers quickly turn to petitions, in which we ask God to help us in our needs. Now, there is certainly nothing wrong with such prayers, and our heavenly Father desires to hear them. But if we never give time for prayers of praise, we miss out of the remembrance and proclamation of all the wondrous things God has done for us. Psalm 117 puts the matter of the praise of God in the forefront, helping us to recall and proclaim the saving acts of God.

Second, in that light, notice that this praise of God is more than the simple recitation of the words, "Praise the LORD!" The praise of God includes the content of what He has done. Psalm 117 includes content that is pretty far-reaching. God is praised as the One who has great steadfast love for His people. God is praised as the faithful One whose promises never fail. In this way, the praise of God and the confession of who He is and what He's done go hand-in-hand. Whenever we praise God, we tell of His saving acts, and whenever we tell of His saving acts, we are praising Him. Psalm 117 helps us to pray in this way.

Finally, Psalm 117 reminds us of the scope of God's praise. Psalm 117 calls upon *all* nations and *all* peoples to join in the praise of God. This is an example of God's desire to call all people to Himself. In the Old Testament, He brought about His promises to and through Israel, but those promises were never only for Israel. Those promises were always for all nations, and those promises have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. In this way, as we pray Psalm 117 still today, the Lord shapes our desires after His own. As we pray in praise to God, we also pray that He would join more people into those praises, so that the Church would continue to grow and flourish as more sinners come to saving faith in Jesus Christ.

In these ways, Psalm 117 is a fitting prayer for the month of December as we prepare to celebrate Christmas. The birth of the Son of God in our humanity is an integral part of God's saving acts for us sinners, and so as we hear and speak that story, we are drawn into the prayer of Psalm 117: "Praise the LORD" At the same time, we know that Jesus' birth was for all people, and so as we pray Psalm 117, we ask God to bring more sinners to faith in the Savior born in Bethlehem: "Praise the LORD, all nations!" God grant you His Christmas peace and joy as you pray Psalm 117 this month!

In Christ,
Pastor Appel

December 2021

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | | | 1 10am GLLC Chapel 5:30pm-Youth Confirmation 7pm-Advent Service | 2 6pm LWML/LLL Christmas Party | 3 Pastor Away- Family Day | 4 |
| 5 8:45am Adult Bible Study 10am Worship/Communion 11am-Family Sunday School | 6 5pm-Quilting 7pm Elders  Elders Meeting | 7 | 8 10am GLLC Chapel 5:30pm-Youth Confirmation 7pm-Advent Service | 9 | 10 Pastor Away- Family Day | 11 |
| 12 8:45am Adult Bible Study 10am Worship/Communion 11am-Family Sunday School | 13 | 14 9am Pastor Circuit Mtg | 15 10am GLLC Chapel 5:30pm-Youth Confirmation 7pm-Advent Service 8pm-Voters Meeting | 16 | 17 Pastor Away- Family Day | 18 |
| 19 8:45am Adult Bible Study 10am Worship/Communion 11am-Family Sunday School | 20 6pm GLLC Mtg | 21 | 22 10am GLLC Chapel NEWSLETTER DEADLINE/NOON  7pm-Advent Service | 23 | 24 7pm-Christmas Eve Worship | 25 9am- Christmas Day Worship |
| 26 8:45am Adult Bible Study 10am Worship/Communion 11am-Family Sunday School | 27 8am Braille | 28 | 29 10am GLLC Chapel | 30 | 31 Pastor Away- Family Day 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

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

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

Elders: Kerry Becker
Colby Zimmerhanel

Dec Altar Guild: June Parker
Libby Caldwell

Organist(s):
June Parker
Esther Wolff
Kim Appel
Ruth Eaton



As of November 26th, 2021

| Name | Balance |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| Prosperity Checking Acct | 48,891.84 |
| CEF-General | 2,472.48 |
| CEF-Land/Youth | 12,442.86 |
| CEF Scholarship | 12,596.26 |
| Legacy Deo | 13,269.19 |
| Total Dedicated Funds | 21,520.33 |
| General Fund Balance | 27,371.51 |

Opportunities to Receive God's Gifts

When you are not able to make it to the weekly Divine Service on a regular basis, please know that opportunities to receive the gifts of God at other times are available. I encourage you to be in touch with me to let me know how I can deliver these gifts of God to you, because no Christian should go without God's gifts in Word and Sacrament. When circumstances do not allow you to join the congregation for a time, I certainly encourage you to make use of the Facebook livestream to hear the Scriptures and the sermon; I also would welcome the opportunity to set an appointment with you to study God's Word with you and bring you the Body and Blood of Jesus on an individual basis. ***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! –Pastor Appel



Pastoral Check-Up

Many go to their doctor regularly to check on their physical health; why not do the same with your pastor concerning your spiritual health? I know that the previous year was difficult in many respects. How has your Christian faith been challenged? How has your Christian faith grown? Let's visit! The precautions of a pandemic aren't so great that a pastoral visit is impossible. Let's find some time to talk so that I can minister to you with the Word of God so that your faith in Christ will grow even in the midst of this life's troubles and trials.



Youth Confirmation

Youth confirmation classes continue each Wednesday evening this fall in the parish hall from 5:30-6:30 PM. Please keep our 7th and 8th graders and their families in your prayers as they grow in the knowledge and grace of God's Holy Word.



| | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| 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 |



Braille volunteers meet the 4th Monday of each month @ 8am. We carpool to Immanuel Lutheran Church in Giddings to assemble braille bible study books.



The BAE will be closed the week of Thanksgiving. They will reopen December 3rd and 4th to donations and shoppers. December 17th and 18th will be the final days for December. The store will reopen to donations and shoppers January 7th and 8th. Grace will partner with First Presbyterian beginning January 11th and 12th with sale and donation days being January 14th and 15th. We appreciate everyone who has donated and those who shop with us.

KFUO Bible Study Resources



Looking for Bible study opportunities during the week? Make use of the fantastic resources for growth in your Christian faith produced by our very own LCMS radio station, KFUE (www.kfuo.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.kfuo.org/category/sharper-iron/.

Organists & Pastors Seminar

Please mark your calendar for Saturday, April 30th, 2022, for a church music seminar at Mt. Calvary in LaGrange. More details will come later, but our goal is to get as many of our organists and pastors as possible together to do some continuing education. We want to work together ever more effectively in each of our congregations. There'll have different presenters, topics, etc., and the plan is to end the day with a hymn sing. Please do set 04/30/22 aside and ask your music staff to do the same. Questions can be directed to Pastor Bernie Schey of Trinity, Dime Box (254-368-0261). Happy Thanksgiving and a most blessed Advent to us all!



| | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| Dec. 1 | Joe Ray (Bubba) Bennight |
| Dec. 3 | Caren Hannusch |
| | Dorwin (Blackie) Wallace |
| Dec. 5 | Robert Vinklerek |
| Dec. 6 | Annie Mae Rohde |
| | John Anderson |
| Dec. 7 | Amber Hurst |
| Dec. 8 | Lisa Stem |
| Dec. 12 | Joshua Zimmerhanel |
| Dec. 15 | Betty Flora |
| 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 |

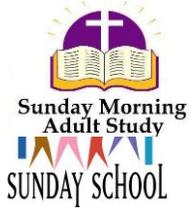
Wishing these Friends a Happy Birthday! from your "Grace" family

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

Advent Midweek Services

The season of Advent begins this year on Sunday, November 28. As the first season of the Church Year, Advent prepares our hearts to receive Christ with repentance at His final coming on the Last Day even as we anticipate the joyous celebration of His first coming on Christmas. Each year, we have midweek services on Wednesday evenings to aid us in this devotional task. This year, our four services will focus on the four canticles that are recorded in the first two chapters of the Gospel according to St. Luke: the Magnificat, the Benedictus, the Gloria in Excelsis, and the Nunc Dimittis. Join us at 7 PM on December 1, 8, 15, and 22 this year for a time of prayer, singing, and God's Word.





Dear Member of Grace Lutheran Church,
As you are aware the Board of Education set up an endowment fund several years ago in an effort to help with Christian Education for our youth here at Grace. Also, as everyone is aware we all had to rearrange our lives last year due to Covid. Because of both of these events we have a fund for education set aside in the account for Grace Lutheran at our local bank. This has happened for a few reasons some of which are youth being home schooled last year causing the funds from the Endowment fund to not be allocated last year, and donations from Grace members to a scholarship fund allocated to benefit our youth in their education. The Board decided to keep these funds in our local bank instead of reinvesting back to the endowment fund so that the funds would be easy to access now that school is starting to be back in person.

That said, this is the time of year where we are all looking for a donation source that would give us a tax deduction. We are asking that you would consider donating to the education fund that we have locally so that when our youth are in need of tuition assistance, we would have the ability to access the funds at the time of need. In the Board's discussion of funds, we decided to keep funds locally as they would be secure, with the uncertainty of the stock market and the fact that we only receive funds from the Endowment when there has been interest earned, it was impossible to know if we would receive any funds at the end of the year from the endowment, and or how much would be received. You are always welcome to donate to the Endowment fund at any time as well if that is something you are more interested in.

The endowment fund is set and can only be utilized for educational purposes. Meaning if we ever needed a new building for education or wanted to help build an educational building in our area, we can petition for that money to be used for such an event. We can not just take the money out of the endowment and use it for non-educational activities.

If you have any questions regarding either of the above-mentioned funds, please feel free to contact a board member or Pastor with your questions.

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

Board of Ed—What are we up to?

We have started meeting every month again, it is such a joy to be able to around great Christian family and friends. We look forward to the coming year and pray things continue to look up for our congregation and the rest of the world.

Proudly this year we were able to sponsor and local family of 7 in need with a Thanksgiving meal. Mary Lou and Charlie will deliver this meal on November 24th.

We are once again going to make goody bags for Christmas Eve service and regret there will be no Christmas Eve Children's play. If anyone has any questions or suggestions, please feel free to share them.

Sunday School continues to go well and would like to encourage everyone to attend either Adult Sunday School at 8:45 or FAMILY Sunday School immediately after church every Sunday. If so, inclined please feel free to attend both, they are a lot of fun and very educational to all involved.

We also want to remind everyone that there is a box in the Narthex for food to go to the Food Pantry. If you want to leave a cash donation in place of food please feel free to leave it with the church office. Please feel free to donate to this great facility

Please watch for more updates on activities and news from the Board of Education,

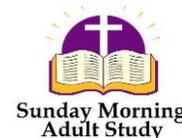
God's Blessings,
Barb Johannessen

Family Sunday School



Family Sunday School continues at Grace! Please join us after the 11:00AM service each Sunday to learn and rejoice in the Word of God together as the family of Jesus here at Grace! 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. 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!

Adult Bible Study



Adult Bible study at 8:45 AM has resumed! We are studying God's Word in the Psalms that He invites us to speak back to Him in prayer. Each week has included a fantastic study and conversation so far; please join us!



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!
Transformed - Romans 12:2**

Falcons Making History

The FLHS boys basketball team has their first **(EVER)** game on Friday, December 3rd at McDade High School at 7pm. Come on out to support our boys, wear your blue and white and cheer the Falcons on to a victory!!

*A schedule of games can be found on our website.

"Faith at Christmas" Program

FLHS students will present a Christmas concert, "Faith at Christmas," on Tuesday, December 7th 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. 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.

Free Wednesday mornings?

Join us for our weekly Chapel Worship Service every Wednesday, beginning at 10:30 am.

Amazon Smile and Wish List

Did you know Faith Lutheran High School is on Amazon Smile? After you select FLHS as the charity of your choice, everytime you purchase something from Amazon Smile, FLHS will receive a donation.

FLHS has also created a wish list on Amazon, for needed materials for this school year. The easiest way to find it is by clicking on the link on the FLHS Facebook page or website. Thank you for your generous support!

Share the Gift of Love

Faith Lutheran High School has a unique role in combining knowledge and God's love in a student's high school experience. We are partnering with families at the intersection of education and faith development. If you would like to support our ministry through a one-time or enduring gift, memorial contribution, or a Thrivent Action Grant, please contact us.

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.

Thank you!

Everyone at FLHS is blessed by each gift that we receive from our supporters. It's not about the size of the gift, but the cheerful attitude that gives thanks to God (2 Corinthians 9:7). Whether your gift seems big or small, it is greatly appreciated and makes a bigger impact than you know!

Keep in Touch

Stop by school and say "Hi," explore what the students are learning in classes and learn more about FLHS. Find and follow us on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube or Twitter - like and share our posts. Also, visit our website at www.flhstx.org!





LWML

Lutheran Women in Mission

UPCOMING:

Dec 2nd
6pm- LWML/LLL
Christmas Party

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.

New officers for 2022-23 for Grace:
President- June Parker, Vice President-Rose Pietsch, Secretary- Mary Lou Oliver, Treasurer-Margie Hicks

November mission project was for Towers Nursing Home.

December mission project is for LINC/Austin.

LWML TEXAS DISTRICT GRANT BULLETIN BYTES:

Our mite goal of \$377,500.00 as of October 31, 2021 has donations of \$277,147.98 so far. This goal will be ended on March 31, 2022. As this goal is ending please remember that the 12 grants are awaiting these mites to fund their projects.

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

National Mission Grant Bulletin Bytes:

Thirst to Learn: Bible Books for Africa's Children — \$100,000

Lutheran Heritage Foundation continues its work of translating, publishing, distributing, and introducing Lutheran materials throughout Africa where the population is more than 1.216 billion people. Sadly, over half those souls are still waiting to be introduced to the one true Savior, Jesus Christ. Islam has made huge inroads in the continent. But thanks be to God, Christian missionaries have been spreading the Light of the Gospel also. Economic and political conditions may force missionaries to leave a country, but the Lutheran books they leave behind stay — and teach — for generations. This grant will fund the printing and distribution of 129,500 engaging, colorful books which will introduce children to Jesus in their Lutheran schools, Sunday schools, and orphanages.



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 2021

Grace Lutheran Church, Smithville, TX

“God’s Word is our great heritage and shall be ours forever!” Continue your daily Bible reading during 2021. 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 | |