

November, 2021



GRACE MESSENGER

WORSHIP:

Sunday— 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

Monday —7:00 p.m.

Sunday School & Bible Study—9:15 a.m.

PASTOR WITTES' MESSAGE

“Wait Upon the Lord”

This season before us is a season of waiting. We await the next Christmas gathering. We await the giving and receiving of Christmas presents. We await that calm and rest that will come when all the decorations and the tree are finally put away. Yes, there is a lot of waiting that is going to take place in the days ahead but don't let that get you down. We simply can't let life overwhelm us or rob us of the joys that are all around us.



We also await in this coming season of Advent the good news of our Savior Jesus born for us in Bethlehem. We also await the even greater news of His 2nd coming. Rejoice that when our Lord Jesus returns to this earth all the saints will be reunited with Him in the heavenly marriage feast. That will be the day to usher us into the new heavens and the new earth. Yes, let's wait for that indeed!

The weekly themes for our “Wait Upon the Lord” series will be as follows:

Wed. Dec. 1 — Wait Upon the Lord with Faith: Abraham and Sarah waited with faith for the birth of their son, Isaac, and we wait with faith for the birth of God's Son, Jesus, trusting that he will come at Christmas to save all people.

(Continued on page 2)

Midweek Worship ~ 11 a.m. & 7 p.m.

“Wait Upon the Lord”

Wednesdays, December 1, 8, 15, & 22

Luncheon following the 11 a.m. Services

Christmas Eve **(NOTE TIME CHANGE)**

4:00 p.m. with Communion-Candlelight

7:00 p.m. with Communion-Candlelight

Christmas Day

10:00 a.m. Worship

Sunday Worship-December 26

8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Worship Services

9:15 a.m. Bible Study & Sunday School

Monday Worship

7:00 p.m. Worship Service

(Continued "Wait Upon the Lord" from page 1)

Wed. Dec. 8 — Wait Upon the Lord with Hope: The prophet Isaiah declared the coming of the Lord, which gave the people of Israel hope for the future. We wait with hope for the future because we know what the future holds—a Savior.

Wed. Dec. 15 — Wait Upon the Lord with Rejoicing: Elizabeth rejoiced as she waited for the coming of her son, John the Baptist. And Mary rejoiced as she waited for the birth of her son, Jesus. In the same manner we rejoice as we wait for the coming of the Son of God.

Wed. Dec. 22 — Wait Upon the Lord with Gratitude: Zechariah's waiting days for John the Baptist's birth were filled with great gratitude for the Lord's promise about to be fulfilled. In these remaining waiting days before our Savior's birth, we are ever more grateful for the arrival of the Promised One.

"Encouragement"

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

We recently heard the amazing words of Hebrews chapter 10 in worship. Starting at verse 24 here are these words: *"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."* The writer acknowledges the Day draws near. The writer also implies there are challenges and difficulties we do face as

we await that day. So let us encourage one another. Let us stir up one another to love and good works. This is one of the primary purposes of the Church. God has called us into this one body of Christ to be members of one another. To lift each other up and to encourage one another in all things.

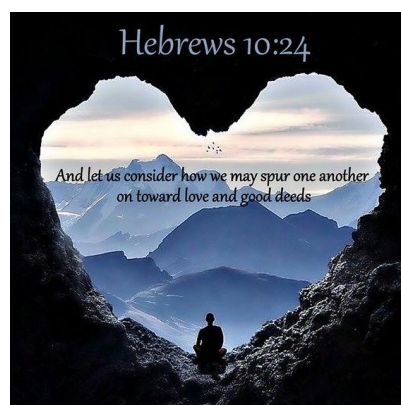
The writer to the Hebrews also includes the encouragement to "not neglect to meet together." If we have learned anything from the past 20 months of this pandemic it is the great need we each have for the physical presence of our loved ones and friends. It is wired into our humanity to need and to long for the fellowship of others. St. Paul even shared this longing back in the 1st century. When imprisonment separated him from the people near to him the letter writing was clearly not enough for him. Paul wrote in 1st Thessalonians: *"But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face. (1 Thess 2:17)"*

I hope to see each of you face to face soon. I long for the opportunity to share encouragement with you in love and good works. I hope for the opportunity and the privilege to continue to share the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection with you. I want to know you more as a brother and sister in Christ whom I plan to share the bliss of paradise with alongside our Savior Jesus.

"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. (Heb. 10:23)"

In Christ

Pastor Witte, Senior Pastor



PASTOR BOB AUXTER, SMP

“It Is Time....”

“And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.” Acts 2:46-47

The first three Sundays in the month of November, we celebrated first, All Saints, the theme of which originated from the conviction that there is a spiritual connection between believers in Christ Jesus, those in Heaven and those living out Christian lives here on Earth.

The focus of the next Sunday in November was on the End Times, remembering that this world and our lives in it are finite, time limited, and that Christ Jesus will come again, suddenly, to usher in the Judgment, resulting in eternal blessings and life with Him, or eternal shame and contempt apart from Him.

The third Sunday in November, the last Sunday in the church calendar year, celebrated Christ the King, the very One in whom we have that assured hope of salvation by faith; the very One who is to come on that Last Day in time; the very One, on the cusp of the Advent season, of whom we remember coming to us on that first Christmas Day, literally Immanuel, God with us.

Take note of the pronouns in these first four paragraphs that bespeak us- our, they, we, us, their, those, all.....each plural in number. The point being proclaimed loud and clear here is that the Church is comprised of vast *numbers* of people- the saved, the believer, the blessed, the led of the Good Shepherd- called, taught, nourished, equipped, sent, for the purpose of adding to the number day by day.....no matter the situation, good, bad, indifferent, difficult.

As one of your pastors here at Grace, I am very much aware of the Covid pandemic, and its devastation. I have observed from this sanctuary at every worship service for the past two years, as well as from those times I provided pulpit supply for other area churches of the LCMS, the fear of gathering among numbers of people, at least within the walls of churches. I fully understand that one might need to exercise caution for yourself or those you love. You might need to keep watching from a distance for a while. But there will come a time when your faith is either going to scream out for nourishment or simply starve and fade away into nothingness.

God’s people can and must gather again, and I hope you’ll join in, for you are sorely missed. The empty pews are a constant reminder of your absence. After all, our gatherings are precious opportunities to worship rightly; confess sin and be absolved; to approach our God with our prayers and petitions of fear, anxiety, concerns; to hear God’s Word read and preached publicly; to give voice to our faith in words and presence; to receive the Sacrament of the Altar rightly administered; to receive the Benediction of the Lord; to be sent into this dark world restored, renourished, and repurposed, with power and protection from on High. Just as we are commanded by God- *“Keep holy the Sabbath day.”* Exodus 20:8.

All ultimately a foretaste of Heaven, for God’s vision of heaven, as presented in His Word, the Scriptures, doesn’t look like a quarantine, a livestream, or a Zoom call. It’s a “face to face” encounter

with the risen Christ, and a worship-filled reunion of both the saints having gone Home to the Lord, and with those here on earth in the Lord Jesus.

The writer of Hebrews put it this way: *“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”* Hebrews 10:25-26

A warm welcome and smile precedes your return. It is time.....to walk in faith, never in fear.

always your servant In Christ Jesus,

Rev. Bob Auxter

TGBTG

ELDER

A Renewal of Our Commitment to Our God of Whom All Blessing Flow

We will soon be approaching another Christmas Season and a New Year. As we celebrate our Savior Jesus Christ’s birth, let us be reminded of who is the source of all our blessings. Each day we try to move closer to life before the pandemic, and for many of us, this can be difficult. But we as Christians know that Christ is still in charge of all we have, struggle with, hope for, deal with and do in this all too short and delicate life. During this past year, we have been living with a future of uncertainty. Let us all look to this special time of year and with faith, not fear and peace, in turning all this over to Him, our creator. We celebrate together in His birth and look forward to His resurrection that grants the forgiveness of sins. As we move forward **TOGETHER** into celebrating Christmas and a New Year, let us all try to renew our commitment to be in fellowship together, prayer together, receive the gifts of Holy Communion together, and a renewal of our source of blessing flow together. We at **GRACE** (God’s Riches At Christ Expense) have been blessed...together. To God Be The Glory! Amen

Galatians 6:9 “So let’s not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessings if we don’t give up.”

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

In His Service,

Tony Castiglione, Elder

COOKIE BAKE Help support the Grace Youth as they fundraise for the National Youth Gathering that will be held in Houston, Texas this year. This will be the 15 triennial LCMS Youth Gathering. The event is held every 3 years since 1980, the LCMS Youth Gathering provides thousands of youth and adults the opportunity to come together as a community of God’s people to be encouraged in their walk with Jesus Christ and learn about the Christian faith and their Lutheran identity. If you would like to support the Grace Youth, please order their homemade Christmas cookies, the cookies are perfect for gifts, parties, or just snacking. The youth will have them ready for you to pick-up by **Sunday, December 19th**.

Order forms are available on the Narthex table, the forms need to be turned in by **Sunday, December 12**. You can order decorated or undecorated. A dozen of decorated or undecorated sugar cookies are \$7.00/doz., \$13.00/2 doz. Thank you for supporting the Grace Youth!

YOUTH LEADER SARAH WITTE

What Are Your Kids Up To?

You might be asking “my” kids? My kids are grown and on their own, doing their own thing. Sure, you might have your biological children doing what they do, or your adopted kids living their own lives. I’m talking about our youth group, our children in the church.

People say it takes a village to raise a child – and there is no time for a sentiment like that than the present. Life is hard – it’s hard for us, but it’s downright difficult for a teenage or young adult. Not even considering the whole COVID situation, I look at what a teenager faces today and see nothing but anxiety inducing fear. Families aren’t what they used to be, it’s more difficult to get a handle on life and a productive future, school is more than just academics. I haven’t even mentioned the drug epidemic, human trafficking, or the lack of support by key people in their lives. All these things culminating together have brought our society to record highs of mental disorders among our young people. And yes, I understand that strife in our lives is nothing new. Hardships have always been a part of life. It’s the coping mechanisms and the support to get through these situations that we are lacking today.



I get asked a lot, “well, what are the youth doing to serve?” and “what can they do in church?” And right now, the youth group is doing a variety of service projects – ISD shopping, VBS, Trunk or Treat, volunteering at Heartbeat, Thanksgiving and Christmas meals, serving meals at Voter’s meetings – I could go on. We even have youth serving as ushers and doing slides and sound during worship. And they do these things with willing hearts. They love to serve. I’ve been asked, “why aren’t they out there raking leaves or shoveling snow for people who can’t do it?” to which I respond, “have you asked?” If they aren’t made aware of the need, how can you expect them to serve?

So, what can I do? What can you do? Be there for our youth. I have a saying on my door that encourages you to be the person that you needed when you were younger. Who did you need in your life? You had your parents or family members to guide you. You had strong mentors that encouraged you. These kids thrive on relationships. They want to be loved. They want to be noticed. The number one reason that young adults list for staying with the church is that they had someone they connected with in their congregation. And it goes beyond donating to next fundraiser. Say hi to them. Pray for them. Show up at a sport or extracurricular event. Have a conversation with them. Ask them how school is going. Even these seemingly little conversations – that you would have easily with anyone else – means the world to them.

So yes, I ask you, what are your kids up to? Be a part of that village that loves on these teens. Notice them and the work they put in. Ask them what they need – and don’t be afraid to share what you need. Chances are they’ll help you out. Be there for them in their activities. We have teens playing a variety of sports, performing in band concerts and drama productions, and more. All you have to do is ask. Build that relationship. Be that mentor. Be that person you needed when you were younger.

Blessings,

Sarah Witte, Youth Leader

CONGREGATIONAL PRESIDENT

SPECIAL VOTERS MEETING

SUNDAY, DEC. 5

Members in Christ,

This past Tuesday, November 16, the Grace Church Council met and discussed the yearly budget. In attendance were members of staff, the Elders, and representatives from boards. There was a lot of discussion on not only the 2022 budget but also what we can do moving forward as a congregation and growing the church through the word of God.

As some of you are aware, the budget was not passed by the Voters at the October 24 meeting. A motion was passed to delay the vote to have further discussion. I have encouraged members over the last few weeks to contact me with questions or any concerns that they may have. I did hear from a number of members, and I appreciate all the discussions. During this time, I also met with Pastor Witte, Larry Smith, and the Grace compensation committee; we have been reviewing the history of our budgets and where the future of the church may be headed.

The November 16 Church Council voted and passed an updated budget that will be presented to the voters on Sunday, December 5, at a special voter's meeting. The meeting will start immediately following the 10:30 am service. I must express how important it is for ALL voting members to be present at this meeting so that we can get the 2022 budget presented and voted on and move forward together with our mission work. Your presence is desired not just to participate in the vote but to be a part of the discussion and learn more about our situation together.

The updated budgets are available in the church office. If you have any questions, I strongly encourage you to talk to Pastor Witte, Larry Smith, or come directly to me. Grace has been truly blessed by the grace of God, and it is important that, as a congregation, move forward together and serve as one body in Christ.

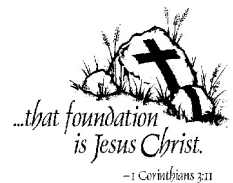
In Christ,

Bryan Weber, Congregational President

GRACE ONLINE GIVING

Please help us grow through electronic giving. Giving online is fast, easy, and secure. Never worry about bringing your checkbook or cash again—you can set up recurring payments, so your donations continue even when you forget or are on vacation.

1. Visit our website at: www.gracelutheranmonroe.org
2. Locate the Give Online button.
3. Donate!



If you need help setting up your online account for electronic giving please call the church office at 734-242-1401 and talk to Margaret, she will help you set your account up. To learn more about giving online or through our GivePlus mobile app, contact our church office.

BIBLE STUDIES

Sunday Morning Bible Study starting at 9:15 am.

Sunday School will start at 9:15 am Preschool thru 5th grade will meet in the fellowship hall, 6th & 8th grades will meet in the classroom, 9th thru 12th grade will meet in the Youth Room in the parish house basement.

Monday Bible Studies will meet at 9 :30 am in the Fellowship Hall.

Thursday Morning Bible Study will meet at 9:30 am in the Classroom. **This class will be on hiatus from Dec. 9 to Dec. 30. Will resume meeting on Thursday, January 6.**

HELP A FAMILY IN NEED

Grace Lutheran Church is proud to offer our services to the Intermediate School District (ISD) by adopting families in need for Christmas. Dan Harmon will be spearheading this mission, if you are interested in helping with a family there is a sign-up sheet in the office or please call the office at 734-242-1401 and Margaret will give you the contact information for Dan Harmon. Dan will have a list of family members, ages, ideas, and needs that will be assigned. Once you received your assigned family please shop and then wrap each gift you decide to buy. Then put the number on the gift and contact Dan to arrange a time to drop off the gifts with him. The gifts will need to be collected by **Sunday, December 12**. If you are avoiding going into the stores at this current time but would like to help, a great idea is to order the items online and have them shipped directly to Dan's house.

If it is not possible for you to adopt a whole family, we can have several members share a family. Any questions please call, text, or email Dan Harmon. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

HELP NEEDED WITH THE ADVENT LUNCHESES

Advent Worship this year will be on *Wednesday, December 1, 8, 15 & 22* and we are looking for anyone who might be interested in helping with a meal (or three meals). The lunch is immediately following the 11:00 a.m. worship service.

It is an excellent time to enjoy fellowship with your church family. You can get a group of friends or family together to do a meal, you and your friends/family can have a lot of fun planning the meal and serving it. The luncheon is at no cost to you-the church will pay for the meals. The meal should be something simple that would take a small amount of time to put together so that the workers would be able to join in the worship service. For example, the lunch could be sloppy joes, sandwiches & chips, soups, order pizza, anything that you and your group would like to put together.

If you have a group of friends or family that would like to help with one of the luncheons or all three, the help would be dearly appreciated, please call Margaret at the church office 242-1401 if you have any questions. There is a sign-up sheet in the office.

Honey Sale Thank you!

On behalf of the Dakota Boys & Girls Ranch we thank you for your generosity in supporting the Honey sales.

30 bottles of honey was purchased and \$260.00 dollars donated to the ranch. A total of \$560.00 dollars was collected.

You should receive your honey in two to three weeks. If for some reason you have not received it, call the church office at 734-242-1401 and they will contact me.

Blessings to all,
George Krueger

News about Our Members

October 25-January 2021

Transfer In:

Kenneth & Jennifer Boyd	Nov. 12
Rachel Boyd	Nov. 12
Luke Boyd	Nov. 12
Michael Boyd	Nov. 12
Kevin Gross	Nov. 12
Caleb Gross	Nov. 12

Deceased

Hal Schmidt	Feb. 3
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WINTER WEATHER

If Monroe Public Schools is cancelled due to weather, Weekday School, Ladies Society, and Thursday Bible Study will not meet. Other groups and Church Boards should check with their leaders during any weather event to see if their meetings are still on. If the office is closed due to weather a notice will be posted on the Grace Facebook page or the church website. The office will be working remotely on those days.

CHURCH DECORATING

The Altar Guild will be decorating the church on **Saturday, November 27**

at 10:00 am. All help would be appreciated, if any member would like to assist in the decorating please come and join in the fun and fellowship!



Grace Lutheran Church
630 N. Monroe Street
Monroe, MI 48162-2935

*Please help us by
notifying us of
address changes.*

THE MESSENGER



Proclaiming God's
Grace through faith
and love.

GRACE'S UPCOMING EVENTS:

*Dec. 1, 8, 15, 22 ~ Advent Services
(11 a.m. & 7 p.m.)*

*Dec. 5 ~ Special Voters Meeting
(Immediately following 10:30 am
service in the church.)*

*Dec. 12~Christmas Caroling ~ 1:00 p.m.
Afterglow (Caroling) ~ 4:00 p.m.*

*Dec. 24~Christmas Eve Worship w/Comm.
(4:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.)*

*Dec. 25 ~ Christmas Day Worship
(10:00 a.m.)*

*Dec. 26 ~ Sunday School Christmas
Program @ 10:30 am service*