

*This Week at Grace*  
*Sunday, December 3, 2006*  
*The First Sunday in Advent*

**INTRODUCTION**

*Like an expectant mother, the church in Advent prepares for an arrival: we anticipate the celebration of Jesus' birth and look forward to Christ's coming again at the end of history. But here and now—in scripture and preaching, in water and bread and wine—God comes to us.*

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come.  
By your merciful protection alert us to the threatening dangers of our sins,  
and redeem us for your life of justice,  
for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever.

**FIRST READING** *Jeremiah 33:14–16*

*In the Hebrew scriptures, righteousness is not so much a moral virtue as the fulfillment of the responsibilities of a relationship among people or with God. God acts righteously in speaking against Israel's faithlessness and in working salvation for them. In today's reading, Jerusalem's future name—"The Lord is our righteousness"—serves as a sign that the Lord is even now working salvation for the people.*

<sup>14</sup> The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>15</sup> In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. <sup>16</sup> In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

**PSALM** *Psalms 25:1–10*

*To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. (Ps. 25:1)*

<sup>1</sup>To | you, O LORD,

I lift | up my soul.

<sup>2</sup>**My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be | put to shame,  
nor let my enemies triumph | over me.**

<sup>3</sup>Let none who look to you be | put to shame;

rather let those be put to shame | who are treacherous.

**<sup>4</sup>Show me your | ways, O LORD,  
and teach | me your paths. R**

<sup>5</sup>Lead me in your | truth and teach me,  
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all | the day  
long.

**<sup>6</sup>Remember, O LORD, your compas- | sion and love,  
for they are from | everlasting. R**

<sup>7</sup>Remember not the sins of my youth and | my transgressions;  
remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your  
good- | ness, O LORD.

**<sup>8</sup>You are gracious and up- | right, O LORD;  
therefore you teach sinners | in your way.**

<sup>9</sup>You lead the low- | ly in justice  
and teach the low- | ly your way.

**<sup>10</sup>All your paths, O LORD, are steadfast | love and faithfulness  
to those who keep your covenant and your | testimonies. R**

## **SECOND READING**      *1 Thessalonians 3:9–13*

*From Timothy, Paul hears about the faithful congregation in Thessalonica and is moved to express his thanks to God. He prays that the congregation may grow in love and holiness until "the coming of our Lord Jesus with all the saints.*

<sup>9</sup> How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? <sup>10</sup> Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

<sup>11</sup> Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. <sup>12</sup> And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. <sup>13</sup> And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

## **GOSPEL**      *Luke 21:25–36*

*When God brings the creation to fulfillment, there will be dismay, perplexity, fright, and shaking heavens. But with this vision also come words of assurance: for the faithful, it will be a time not to cower in fear, but to stand boldly and receive God's promised redemption.*

<sup>25</sup> There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. <sup>26</sup> People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>27</sup> Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great

glory. <sup>28</sup> Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

<sup>29</sup> Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; <sup>30</sup> as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. <sup>31</sup> So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. <sup>32</sup> Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. <sup>33</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

<sup>34</sup> Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, <sup>35</sup> like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup> Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

### **THIS WEEK AT GRACE**

<b>TODAY:</b>	8:30a	and 11:00a	Worship Services
	9:30a		Coffee Fellowship
	9:45a		Sunday School/Education Hour
	12:00-3:00p		Advent Family Activities and Decorating Festival
<b>MONDAY:</b>	7:00p		Book Club
	7:30p		Cantori Rehearsal
<b>TUESDAY:</b>	9:30a		Ladies Bible Study
	11:00a		Pastor's Text Study
	11:30a		Freeborn County Ministerium
	2:30p		3-D Meeting
	6:30p		Property and Finance Ministry Team Meeting
	7:00p		Health Cabinet Meeting
<b>WEDNESDAY:</b>	9:00a		Staff Meeting
	9:00a		Sewing Day
	5:00p		Chew-n-Chat
	5:30p		Cherub/Chancel Choir Rehearsals
	6:30p		7 <sup>th</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> , and 9 <sup>th</sup> gr. Confirmation Classes
	6:30p		Sr. High Bible Study
	6:30p		Bells of Praise
	7:30p		Adult Choir
<b>THURSDAY:</b>	6:00a		Early Morning Bible Study
	6:30p		GLCW Christmas Party
	NO		Evening Bible Study

**FRIDAY:** 1:30p ThorneCrest Bible Study  
3:30p 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> gr. Youth Room

**SATURDAY:** 9:00a Sunday School Christmas Program Rehearsal  
2:00-5:00p Open House honoring Don & Dolly Worke on their 80<sup>th</sup> Birthdays and 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary

**NEXT SUNDAY:** 8:30a and 11:00a Worship Services  
9:30a Coffee Fellowship  
9:45a Sunday School / Education Hour  
1:30p *Nova Cantabile* Concert  
2:00p Girl Scout Meeting  
5:00p Sunday School Christmas Program

**MISSIONARY FOR A DAY:** [Dec. 3: Given by Pastor Milt & Delores Ost.] [Dec. 3: Sunday School] [Dec. 6: GLCW].

**REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS** our members and friends known to have been hospitalized this past week: Marilee Citsay, Andrea Harmdierks, Mike Levison, and Elizabeth Nelson.

**PLEASE REMEMBER** those needing the continuing prayers of our congregation: Ella Anderson (granddaughter of Dan & Bonnie Anderson), Janice Anderson, Larry Bergo, Kathy Diaz, Mark Fisher (father of Lynn Stadheim), Theresa Gamble, Dan Hagen, Tara Hanson, April Hustoft, Marlys Jahnke, Lucille Kittelson, Anna Kycek, Conrad & Rose Masyga (parents of Kris Heine), Vern Nasby, DeAnna Nelson, LeMoyne Oakland, Marian Odson, Lissa Parrish, Joyce Schreiber, Sally Skrlin, LaVon Stewart, Sally Witham (mother of Greg Witham), and Eleanor Wolfe.

**THE ROSE IN THE CHANCEL** is given today in celebration of the birth of *Chaise Olivia*, daughter of Brandon & Andrea Harmdierks, Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>.

**GREETERS FOR OUR SERVICES** this morning are Brad & Jody Kirchner, Rich Oliphant, and Steve Vogt at 8:30; and Bob Pleiss, Mike Pleiss, Carolyn Breuer, and Joyce Purdy at 11:00.

**ACOLYTES TODAY** are Sam Matheson and Jasmine Gavle at 8:30; and Stephanie Ferguson and Paige Hanna at 11:00.

**LESSON READERS** for our worship services are Karen Ohlmann at 8:30; and Jo Sandler at 11:00.

**ASSISTING WITH COMMUNION** are Bill & Pam Leland at 8:30; and LuVerne

Godtland and Hazel Spiering at 11:00.

**THE SALVATION ARMY ANGEL TREE** is in the narthex this morning. You can purchase a Christmas gift for a needy child in Albert Lea and return it to the church *unwrapped* by Friday, Dec. 15<sup>th</sup> by simply taking one of the angels off the tree. Angels are labeled by gender and age. Suggested price range is \$10-\$15. Thank you for your support of this important ministry in our community.

**ADVENT PACKETS** are still available in the narthex today for the Advent season. They include great activity ideas and information - something for everyone! Stop and pick one up today.

**HEARTS TOUCHING HEARTS in the Lord**, a book detailing Grace Lutheran's mission work in Latvia and Russia, is available this morning in the waiting area near the offices.

**WOULD YOU LIKE** to make a Christmas gift to a resident of Good Samaritan Center? The annual gift this year to each resident is a sun catcher at \$5.50. Send your donation to Theresa Thorland, Therapeutic Recreation Director, Albert Lea Good Samaritan Center, 75507 240<sup>th</sup> St., Albert Lea, MN 56007. Thank you for your generosity.

**REFRESHMENTS BETWEEN SERVICES** are being served this morning by Keiffer Wire and his parents, Tony & Paula.

**WE NEED YOUR HELP!** We believe there are many times when we are unaware that someone is in the hospital. This can happen for a number of reasons. You don't want to bother the pastors. You enter through emergency or urgent care. You think your name is being placed on the list we have access to and it does not get on the list for some reason. It is our desire to provide pastoral care to all who are hospitalized for whatever reason. Please help us by letting us know you are in the hospital or will be hospitalized. Thank you for your help! -- Pastors John and Todd

**CARING AND SHARING NEWS:** There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex today for anyone who would like to volunteer to be a monthly co-chair for Caring and Sharing. This is for a one-month commitment to help with Caring and Sharing events. The month you choose, and the duties will be to call for helpers for any events that will be held in that month (funerals, weddings, anniversaries, luncheons, etc.). Also, you will need to call for cakes/desserts to be donated for those as needed. Anyone who would like to be placed on a cake/dessert donation list as a standby or as extra help "as needed" along with their regular month to be called, please stop at the table and sign up for that as well. Thank you for caring.

**BOOK CLUB** will meet Monday evening, Dec. 4<sup>th</sup>, 7:00p, at the home of Hazel Spiering. The featured book for the month is *The Brother's Keeper* by Tracy Groot. Please join us.

**HIGH SCHOOL HOLIDAY VOCAL CONCERT:** The Albert Lea High School Vocal Department encourages everyone to come to their annual holiday concert to be held tomorrow evening, Dec. 4<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00p and again at 8:00p in the high school auditorium. This concert has traditionally been a favorite of the community and is guaranteed to put all that attend into the holiday spirit. The concert will feature the Tiger Choir, Varsity Choir, Concert Choir, Caroliers, and Chorale singing both traditional carols and other choral pieces. Admission to the concert is \$6 for adults and \$4 for seniors and students. Music concert passes are also valid for this concert. Tickets are available at the door, with the doors opening that evening at 5:20p.

**GLCW CHRISTMAS PARTY: Thursday, Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>, 6:30p**

All Grace members (male and female, young and old) and their friends are invited to hear the Albert Lea High School Chorale, join in a Christmas devotional, sing some Advent songs, and share in warm fellowship. There will be Christmas treats following the program and meeting. Hope to see you there!

(There will be a short meeting of the GLCW Board members to go over any unfinished business for the end of the year.)

**THE GLCW WOULD LIKE TO THANK** everyone who contributed to the "No Bake" Bake Sale held on Nov. 19<sup>th</sup>. The fundraiser brought in \$620.00, very comparable to the earnings of the Mall Charity Day. With very little effort on anyone's part. This may be a keeper! Thank you, Joyce Langerud, for the suggestion. If there are people who were not in church that day but who would like to contribute to this fundraiser, please put your contribution in an envelope labeled *Bake Sale* and leave it in the church office.

**AN INVITATION:** Open House Celebration honoring Don & Dolly Worke on their 80<sup>th</sup> Birthdays and 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary will be hosted by their family on Saturday, Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>, 2:00-5:00p, in the Grace Lutheran Fellowship Hall. Everyone is welcome to attend.

**PLEASE JOIN US FOR ADULT FORUM** today and the next two weeks as we explore the significance of prayer in our lives. As we enter the season of Advent we need to be mindful of the preparatory nature of the season. Prayer is central to our preparation. We will talk about praying in Advent, the significance of prayer as disciples of Jesus, and other prayer topics. We will also invite people to share about their own prayer life. Come and join us!

**WE RECENTLY RECEIVED THE GIFT** of a new "Lectionary for Worship: Year C" as a gift from Jim & Judy Munyer given in memory of their son, Andy Munyer. As we begin this new church year and the season of Advent we give thanks for this gift and it's addition to our worship life.

**GRACE SENIORS - Annual Christmas Celebration: Wednesday, Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>, 12:00 Noon**

Grace Seniors will celebrate their annual Christmas get-together in Fellowship Hall at Grace Lutheran. They will enjoy a catered noon meal by Conger Inn and then the singing of Christmas carols with Judy Messen at the keyboard. And of course, Mrs. Kandie

Shupe will sing for us. To attend, reservations are necessary by Sunday, Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>. The cost is \$8.00 per person. To register, contact Gerhard or Irmgard Kleih (826-3176). We hope to see you there – and bring a friend along! *If you need a ride, please call Lisa in the church office or the Kleih's (826-3176).*

**MINNEAPOLIS MISSION PROJECT**

7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade youth are encouraged to sign up for a weekend of giving. Urban Immersion is a program sponsored by the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches that connects groups with volunteer agencies in need of helpers. They work with over 100 agencies that help and support those in need. We will be working with places like the Dorothy Day Center, Feed My Starving Children, and the Salvation Army by doing a number of jobs that may include serving food, painting, or helping in a daycare setting. We have spaces reserved to bring youth up to Minneapolis to stay in their facilities the weekend of Jan. 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>. Cost of the event is \$40.00 and includes transportation, food, and stay. Please sign up for this great opportunity on the bulletin board located outside of Denae's office.



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**Would you like to buy a poinsettia plant and share it with  
the Congregation for Christmas?**

**24 plants are available at \$10.00 each**

**In honor/memory of:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Given by:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Please place form along with payment in the offering or leave in the church office by  
Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>.*

**GIVING AT GRACE:**

The Property and Finance Ministry appreciates your generous support.  
Your faithful stewardship is essential for us to continue to support our ministries at Grace.

	<b>Sunday, Nov. 26<sup>th</sup></b>	<b><u>Year to Date</u></b>
General Fund Giving	\$ 10,307.00	\$ 447,925.00
Budgeted Need	\$ 9,803.00	\$ 460,741.00
Quarters for World Hunger	\$ 54.25	\$ 2,403.75
Stones, Rocks, Boulders Fund	\$ 220.00	

Attendance Last Sunday - 478; Last Year - 411

**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**Albert Lea, Minnesota**

**FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT**  
December 3, 2006