

This Week at Grace
Sunday, December 2, 2007
The First Sunday in Advent

Advent Festival Is Today!

INTRODUCTION

The new church year begins with a wake-up call: Christ is coming soon! In today's readings both Paul and Jesus challenge us to wake from sleep, for we know neither the day nor hour of the Lord's coming. Isaiah proclaims the day when God will gather all people on the holy mountain and there will be no more war or suffering. Though we vigilantly watch for the promised day of salvation, we wait for what we already have: Christ comes among us this day as the word and meal that strengthens our faith in the promises of God.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection save us from the threatening dangers of our sins, and enlighten our walk in the way of your salvation, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

SERMON TITLE: "Our World Is Going to Change at 8 Minutes Past Midnight on December 22!"

FIRST READING: Isaiah 2:1-5

The visionary message presented in this reading focuses on a future day when God establishes a universal reign of peace. Divine decisions will make war obsolete, and the worshiping community responds: "Let us walk in the light of the Lord now!"

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

²In days to come
the mountain of the LORD's house
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be raised above the hills;
all the nations shall stream to it.

³Many peoples shall come and say,
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths."

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,
 and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
⁴He shall judge between the nations,
 and shall arbitrate for many peoples;
 they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
 and their spears into pruning hooks;
 nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
 neither shall they learn war any more.
⁵O house of Jacob,
 come, let us walk
 in the light of the LORD!

PSALM: Psalm 122

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD." (Ps. 122:1)

¹I was glad when they ¹said to me,
 "Let us go to the house ¹of the LORD."
²**Now our ¹feet are standing
 within your gates, ¹O Jerusalem.**
³Jerusalem is built ¹as a city
 that is at unity ¹with itself;
⁴**to which the tribes go up, the tribes ¹of the LORD,
 the assembly of Israel, to praise the name ¹of the LORD. R**
⁵For there are the ¹thrones of judgment,
 the thrones of the ¹house of David.
⁶**Pray for the peace ¹of Jerusalem:**
 "May they pros- ¹per who love you.
⁷Peace be with- ¹in your walls
 and quietness with- ¹in your towers.
⁸**For the sake of my kindred ¹and companions,
 I pray for ¹your prosperity.**
⁹Because of the house of the ¹LORD our God,
 I will seek to ¹do you good." R

SECOND READING: Romans 13:11–14

Paul compares the advent of Christ to the coming of dawn. We live our lives today in light of Christ's coming in the future.

¹¹Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; ¹²the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; ¹³let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness,

not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

GOSPEL: Matthew 24:36–44

Jesus describes his second coming as a sudden, unexpected event that will bring salvation or judgment upon people caught up in the usual affairs of daily life. He urges people to be alert and expectant.

³⁶But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, ³⁹and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴²Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

THIS WEEK AT GRACE

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| TODAY: | 8:30a | and 11:00a | Worship Services |
| | 9:30a | | Coffee Fellowship |
| | 9:45a | | Sunday School / Education Hour |
| | 12:00-3:00p | | Advent Family Festival |
| MONDAY: | 1:30p | | Bone Builders Group |
| | 7:00p | | Book Club |
| TUESDAY: | 9:00a | | Staff Meeting |
| | 9:30a | | Ladies Bible Study |
| | 11:00a | | Pastor's Text Study |
| | 11:30a | | Freeborn Co. Ministerium |
| | 7:00p | | Health Cabinet Meeting |
| WEDNESDAY: | 9:00a | | Sewing Day |
| | 5:00p | | Chew-n-Chat |
| | 5:30p | | Cherub and Chancel Choir Rehearsals |
| | 6:30p | | Confirmation Classes |
| | 6:30p | | Sr. High Bible Study |
| | 6:30p | | Bells of Praise |
| | 7:30p | | Adult Choir |

THURSDAY: 6:00a Early Morning Bible Study
9:00a BERC Pastor's Meeting
1:30p Bone Builders Group
6:30p GLCW Christmas Party

FRIDAY: 1:30p ThorneCrest Bible Study
3:30p Youth Room for 4th-6th Graders

SATURDAY: 7:00p *Nova Cantabile* Concert

NEXT SUNDAY: 8:30a and 11:00a Worship Services
9:30a Coffee Fellowship
9:45a Sunday School / Education Hour

MISSIONARY FOR A DAY: [Dec. 2: Given by Pastor Milt & Delores Ost.] [Dec. 2: Sunday School] [Dec. 2: In memory of sisters, Inga and Polly Loken, and brother, Art given by Alice Lageson.] [Dec. 3: Given by Babe & Lois Brandt.] [Dec. 4: Given by Pastor Todd Walsh.] [Dec. 5: GLCW].

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS our members and friends known to have been hospitalized this past week: Irene Erickson, and Casey Gilliam.

PLEASE REMEMBER those needing the continuing prayers of our congregation: Janice Anderson, Elizabeth Baker, Larry Bergo, Paula Burkart (niece of John & Beth Ruud), Kathy Diaz, Lyle Dickson, Miff Eglund, Ray & Janet Ewing, Theresa Gamble, Jeanie Godtland, Jan Guse, Tara Hanson, Edna Herfendal, Mildred Hopperstad, April Hustoft, Marlys Jahnke, Norman Johnson, Lisa Koenecke (daughter of Dave & Elaine Long), Glenn McDaniel, Ethel McGill, Vern Nasby, Dave & Kelli Nelson, LeMoyne Oakland, Lissa Parrish, Mike Ranney, Morgan Rasmussen, Jackson Schrock (grandson of Vince & Corrine Tims), LaVon Stewart, Carter Tappe, Naomi Tatarek (daughter of LuVerne & Jeanie Godtland), Paige Thompson (great-niece of Judy Anderson), Leland Wadding, Sally Witham (mother of Greg Witham), and Eleanor Wolfe.

IN YOUR PRAYERS, please also remember the family of Arvilla Anderson (mother of Eugene Anderson) who passed away this week.

OUR CONGRATULATIONS to Casey Gilliam and Mike Nelson, upon the birth of daughter *Adylan May*, born Nov. 26th.

GREETERS for our worship services are Carlyle & Dona Matheson and Tom & Julie Sorenson at 8:30; and Mary Pirsig, Loren & Mary Grasdalen and John Knutson at 11:00.

ACOLYTES are Amanda Westcott and Kayla Swee at 8:30; and Alex Wieland and Tyler Stadheim at 11:00.

LESSON READERS today are Phil Rogers at 8:30; and Jade Larson at 11:00.

COMMUNION BREAD AND WINE are given in honor of Melvin & Arlene Hobbiebrunken on their 56th wedding anniversary.

ASSISTING WITH COMMUNION for our worship services are Jerry & Tricia Dahl at 8:30; and Randy & Lynn Stay at 11:00.

SPECIAL THANKS to Mike Cottrell who is serving as van driver this morning. Our church van picks up riders every Sunday for the 11:00 worship service. If you or anyone you know is interested in riding the van, please call the church office to be added to the pick-up schedule.

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

LOOKING FOR A FUN, unique Christmas gift? Wanting to focus on the Spirit instead of stuff? Consider donating to Heifer International in someone's name. Information and gift cards are available at the table just outside the Narthex on Sundays through Dec. 16th.

EQUAL EXCHANGE Coffee, Tea, and Chocolate is being sold today between services. Next sale date is Jan. 6th.

“PREPARE THE ROYAL HIGHWAY; the King of Kings is near!” Be sure to pick up one of the Advent coin collectors from our ushers. Proceeds will go to the Martin Luther Fund from which help is given to needy families in our congregation. Turn them in with the offering as you fill them, or at the end of Advent. Let's see what we can raise by Christmas! (If you would like to contribute without using the folder, please simply make an offering to the church and mark it for the Martin Luther Fund.) Thank you for your generous support at this special time.

ADULT FORUM: Pastor Todd and Jerry Bizjak will be sharing about their November pilgrimage to the Holy Land during Adult Forum today and next Sunday in the Fireside Room. Come and hear about the sights, food, holy places, and “the attempted kidnapping.” Seriously, come and hear about the remarkable place past and present. Junior High Bible Studies – Remember, you are also attending!

COULD YOU HELP? Our GLCW is currently seeking volunteers to help as Caring & Sharing co-chairs for various months in 2008. Sign up with a friend. Your help would be greatly appreciated! Sign-up sheets are located on the GLCW table in the narthex.

TODAY IS THE DAY!! What? THE ADVENT FESTIVAL – You have begun the Advent Season by worshipping this morning. We invite you to stay (or come back) for lunch at noon followed by opportunities for everyone of all ages to decorate our church for the Advent/Christmas season. Choose the area or activity you like, but join your Grace family in this festive beginning of the Advent Season.

BOOK CLUB will hold their next meeting on Monday evening, Dec. 3rd, 7:00p, at the home of Hazel Spiering (2122 Grand Ave.). The featured book is *Ten Thousand Charms* by Allison Pittman.

GLCW CHRISTMAS PARTY: Thursday, Dec. 6, 6:30p

Everyone is invited to attend, both men and women. Bring your neighbors and your friends! The musical group, Escalade will be performing – then join us for treats following the program.

NOVA CANTABILE TO PERFORM AT GRACE: Saturday, Dec. 8th

Nova Cantabile, a southern Minnesota semi-professional singing group, will perform at Grace Lutheran on Saturday, Dec. 8th, at 7:00p. Members of *Nova Cantabile* are musicians and music educators from throughout southern Minnesota, including Sherry Seberson (Grace member). Tickets are available at the church the day of the performance.

GRACE SENIORS: Wednesday, Dec. 12th, 12:00 Noon

Our Annual Christmas Celebration

Grace Seniors will celebrate their annual Christmas Get-Together in Fellowship Hall at Grace Lutheran. We will enjoy a catered noon meal by Conger Inn, followed by the singing of Christmas carols with Judy Menssen at the keyboard. (To attend, reservations are necessary by Sunday, Dec. 9th. 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, 373-6496; or the Kleih's at 826-3176.*

HARMONY JUNCTION Barbershop Chorus will present their annual Christmas Concert on Sunday, Dec. 16th: 3:00p at First Lutheran Church, or 7:00p at St. Theodore Catholic Church. A free-will offering will be received for charity. Everyone is welcome!

THANKS, DENAE JUNTUNEN!!! I know we all want to have an opportunity to formally give our thanks to Denae for her work as our Youth Director. We have designated Sunday, Dec. 16th, between services for that purpose. Please join us in the Fellowship Hall from 9:30 to 10:45 on that day as we celebrate her ministry among us.

YOU ARE INVITED to “A Christmas Messiah” Concert by *Nova Cantabile*, a semi-professional vocal ensemble from Southern Minnesota (including Grace member Sherry Seberson). They will perform in concert at Grace Lutheran on Saturday, Dec. 8, at 7:00p. Come enjoy selections from Handel’s “*Messiah*” as well as seasonal favorites in a variety of musical styles. Admission \$5, at the door.

OUR THANKS to Altar Guild workers for November: Bev Field, Joyce Langerud, and Janell Johnson.

ADDITIONAL SINGERS are invited to sing in the Adult Choir for a shorter commitment, as we prepare music for Advent and Christmas. We will sing a Lessons and Carols service on Sunday, Dec. 23rd. Rehearsals are Wednesday evenings, 7:30-8:30p. If you have questions, call Sherry Seberson (377-9329).

GREAT IDEA FOR CHRISTMAS GIFTS: Hearts Touching Hearts, book by Pastor Milt Ost, relating exciting mission trips to Latvia and Russia, \$10 each. Contact Lisa in the church office.

9th-12th GRADERS: The summer 2008 trip has been announced! Youth in 9th-12th grades are invited to sign up for the Midwest Meets Adventure weeklong excursion. We will travel to Camp Emmaus in northern MN, journey for our adventure part of the trip to Devil's Lake State Park in Wisconsin, and then off to inner city Chicago for mission work. Dates for this trip are July 13th-19th. Cost will be \$150.00 plus fundraising. Sign up deadline is Dec. 16th. A sign-up sheet is located on the bulletin board outside of Denae's office.

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.

	Sunday, Nov. 25th	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Giving	\$ 10,117.00	\$ 463,269.00
Budgeted Need	\$ 10,096.00	\$ 474,512.00
Quarters for World Hunger	\$ 43.25	\$ 2,702.25
Stones, Rocks, Boulders Fund	362.00	

Attendance Last Sunday - 403; Last Year - 478

**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
Albert Lea, Minnesota
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
December 2, 2007**