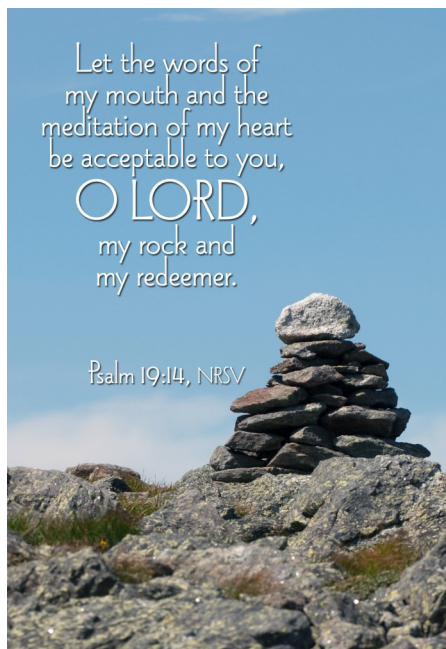


THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Sunday, January 19, 2025

9:30 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion



"Be and Make Disciples of Jesus Christ"

Grace Lutheran Church

111 Lutheran Drive, P.O. Box 86

Eaton, Ohio 45320

937.456.6258

GraceEaton111@gmail.com – gracelutheranofeaton.com

Pastor Dwight Hanson

***PEACE:**

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C **And also with you.**

***GATHERING HYMN: “O Morning Star How Fair and Bright” vs. 1,3,5
(LBW 76)**

***GREETING:**

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C **And also with you.**

***PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

P Let us pray: Gracious Lord, giver of all that is good, through the power of your Holy Spirit you abundantly bless your children with gifts for the building up of the body of Christ. Empower us to recognize and value the gifts of others and through the strengthening of faith use our own gifts for the work of the kingdom;

C **through Jesus Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

FIRST READING: Isaiah 62:1-5

A A reading from Isaiah:

¹For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch.

²The nations shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory, and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give. ³You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. ⁴You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate, but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her, and your land Married; for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married. ⁵For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

A The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 128

A ¹Happy are they all who fear the LORD, and who follow in his ways!

C **²You shall eat the fruit of your labor; happiness and prosperity shall be yours.**

A ³Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine within your house, your children like

olive shoots round about your table.

C **4The man who fears the LORD shall thus indeed be blessed.**

A **5The LORD bless you from Zion, and may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life.**

C **6May you live to see your children’s children; may peace be upon Israel.**

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

A A reading from First Corinthians:

1Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. **2**You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. **3**Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit. **4**Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; **5**and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; **6**and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. **7**To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. **8**For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, **9**to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, **10**to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. **11**All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

A The Word of the Lord.

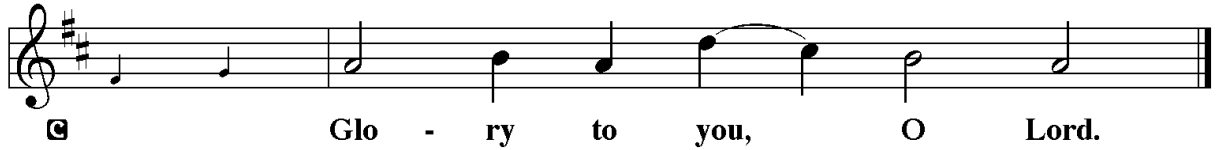
C **Thanks be to God.**

***VERSE:**



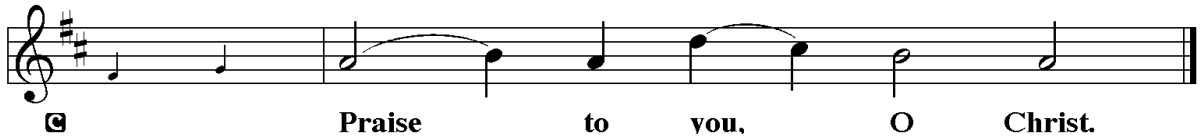
***GOSPEL: John 2:1-11**

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the second chapter.



¹On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ²Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. ³When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” ⁴And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.” ⁵His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” ⁶Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸And he said to them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast.” So they took it. ⁹When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom ¹⁰and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.” ¹¹This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

P The Gospel of the Lord.



CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

SERMON: Pastor Dwight Hanson — The Best for Last

2nd Sunday after Epiphany; 1/19/2025; Grace Lutheran Church; Pastor Dwight Hanson
Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 128; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11

Children's message: When you hear that something is "good," what does that mean? Trace it all the way back. God is the source of goodness. Now you know why we gather as God's family. Week after week, Jesus welcomes us with the highest truth and the deepest love. He has given you an invisible gift, the Holy Spirit. What does "invisible" mean? You can't see it with your eyes. *But with your heart* you can tell where the Holy Spirit has been. There you will find faith (1 Cor. 12:3b), genuine kindness, and holy love. God creates goodness in you and in the whole family of faith. The Bible calls this "*the common good*" (1 Cor. 12:7). You, too, have something to share, even if it's just a smile when someone really needs a friend. It's January, right? It's been cold, with more on the way. A lot of people have a bad case of the grumpies! Do you see your mission? But the only way to have goodness to offer is to make sure that you're receiving it from the very source. That's why we're here, and why we pray. So, let's get to it...

The Best for Last

Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. For today's sermon, I'll be focusing on the Gospel passage, with Jesus at the wedding feast. Studying this passage over the years, I've noticed that a lot of the discussion has revolved around the subject of the wine, itself. Some have wondered why this was the first miracle of Christ. One time, I heard someone insist that the water was made into grape juice, only. All such reflections bear the mark of a much later age.

Back when Jesus walked the earth, wine was only a problem when it was consumed to excess, leading people away from God (see Isaiah 5:11-12). But as part of a wedding celebration, quality wine was assumed. This was the nature of the crisis in today's text, as felt by people living in real time. The host family was running low. Cups were *not* running over.

Mary, the mother of our Lord, understood and sought immediate action. Jesus also understood. But he had an additional concern, the timing of the revealing of his glory. "*My hour has not yet come*" (Jn. 2:4b). He would be bursting from relatively quiet preparation, to busy, open, public ministry, with little time for rest, and with a dark chapter looming, a night of betrayal that would once again involve wine, the light of goodness and forgiveness amid the darkness of evil. Had the time come to begin walking that road? All along the way, crowds and needs would press from every side.

Mary felt that action was necessary. Perhaps she knew better than most what it was like to be on the other side of peoples' judging glances? Besides, was there not a certain commandment, high on the list, that called for the honor of a father and a mother to be recognized? And lastly, it is hard to overemphasize the importance in that culture of the concept of *hospitality*. In context, it was a crisis moment.

Of course, there's scholarly speculation about why the wedding provisions may have been running short. Was the crowd bigger than expected? Were the hosts poor, having offered what they could, but with a growing sense that wishful thinking was not enough? Whatever the case, failure at a wedding celebration in those days would have brought incredible shame to the family, and set the young couple off on the wrong foot, beginning with their wedding day.

The situation was tense. Was it the end of the world? No. But it was a real-world problem. And did we not just celebrate the birth of the Messiah into the reality of time, culture, and human nature? It makes a difference to acknowledge the truth that God is truly with us.

Looking back, there's something fitting about the fact that Jesus began his ministry with an overflowing cup, with good news in exchange for shame and burden, with the very joy and imagery of a wedding banquet. The New Testament uses this picture frequently. We have been invited to the wedding banquet of the Heavenly King!

This brings us to a delightful moment in Scripture, the shock of the steward of the feast concerning the excellence of what he had just tasted. Let me use a slightly different translation to catch the spirit of the passage. The steward said, "*The best wine is always served first. Then after the guests have had plenty, the other wine is served. But you have kept the best until last!*" (John 2:10; Contemporary English Version).

The best for last! Let that phrase bounce around in your thoughts. Does that not fit the story of the Bible, itself? After all those years of Israel living by faith, not sight, the Messiah had come. Let the celebration begin! God had saved the best for last. That said, there's a great spiritual rebellion that wants nothing of God's goodness to be celebrated, and will challenge it the entire way, including in our own time. But God is God, and goodness abides, and we have been invited to live within a new reality.

What a difference it would make if we applied these words—the best for last—to our own lives! This is a theme that will carry us to the end of time. When we rise up on the first day of the new creation, will we not utter something like the words of the steward? *But you, Lord, have saved the very best until now!* One day, with our own eyes, faith will be sight, and this will all be truly evident.

What might your life look like if you trusted that this was so? Talk about perspective! That doesn't mean that we don't have crises and problems. Obviously, we all face them on a regular basis. This world is still the world, after all. But when we wait on the Lord, life's problems have a way of working out for good. And just because, from time to time, God seems to be silent, it doesn't mean that he's absent. His ways are simply beyond our ways. But God is good, and we can trust Heaven's plan.

I'd like to share some reflections on this passage from a Bible teacher named Arthur John Gossip. He laid great emphasis on the *joyful* “*astonishment*” of the steward. And he expanded it, saying that this strong response stands as **the “characteristic note”** of the whole New Testament, *and* of those who find their hope within these pages, in other words, us. What he wrote is worth quoting and pondering:

“Always its people [New Testament people] keep bursting in on us, their eyes shining, their hearts on fire, crying, ‘We’ve found it! The thing for which the whole world has been seeking, and it works!’” “Do you find life too difficult for you? So did we, but not now, with the amplitudes of grace there are for us in Jesus Christ.” “It was because the early Christians felt that, said that, proved that, that they drew others to the faith.” “The only way in which we shall win the world for Christ is by convincing those outside that we have something infinitely valuable that they lack. Then of themselves they will come running for a share in it” (pg. 494,

The Interpreter's Bible; Vol. 8).

Think of real people you know, perhaps even yourself. Many are weary from a misguided life, having misunderstood the ultimate purpose. Many are just plain worn down from the responsibilities of the regular grind. And

many are alarmed in the face of crisis. All of this is true about the fallen human condition. The difference is that we believe that there can be a steward-of-the-feast moment. And that moment can turn into an abiding stay. The invitation has been given. All that awaits is for the troubled soul to taste and see that the Lord is good (Psalm 34:8). Then come those words, *ah, the best for last!*

God has not given up on them, or you, or all of us, together! This is why you made time for worship amid the grumpiness of January's cold. The warm heart of God is calling to you, and through you, to others. What does this mission of goodness look like?

1) We need God. 2) We need each other in the family of God. 3) The world needs people who understand numbers one and two, the redeeming love of Christ, and the meaning that comes from living it out in genuine community. This is our calling until "not yet" meets its moment of ultimate fulfillment, at last. Then, we will all stand before the throne, right there next to the steward of the feast, sharing the same astonished look of joy, each and every one a recipient of an overflowing cup of blessings from the Lord Jesus, himself. Thanks be to God. Amen.

***HYMN OF THE DAY: “Brightest and Best” vs. 1, 3-4 (LBW 84)**

***THE APOSTLES’ CREED:**

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day He rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH:

A Let us pray: Almighty and everlasting God, whose Light radiates eternally, shine in our hearts and minds so that we follow you every day. And help us to be bearers of your Light to everyone we meet. Help us all to taste and see that the Lord is good. Lord, in your mercy,

C Hear our prayer.

A We pray for the whole Christian Church. In this season of Epiphany, remind us of the Church’s mission calling. Bless and keep Bishop Selbo and staff, our Mission District, NALC Disaster Response, and our outreach partners: Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries; Abundant Grace of West Chester; Chris, Emily and family and the World Mission Prayer League; and all other helpful partners. Lord, in your mercy,

C Hear our prayer.

A We pray, O Lord, for the needs of the world. Grant wisdom to our civic leaders and all who hold offices of earthly power, that Heavenly counsel would guide them through daily dilemmas. We pray for all who have been affected by the fires in California, and for every organization that has tried to lend a hand. Strengthen and comfort them, as only you can do. We pray for every war-torn nation, and for all who have been kept captive or harmed in any way. Bring freedom and healing. And we pray for protection over all who serve honorably in

harm's way on behalf of others, and their families. Lord, in your mercy,
C Hear our prayer.

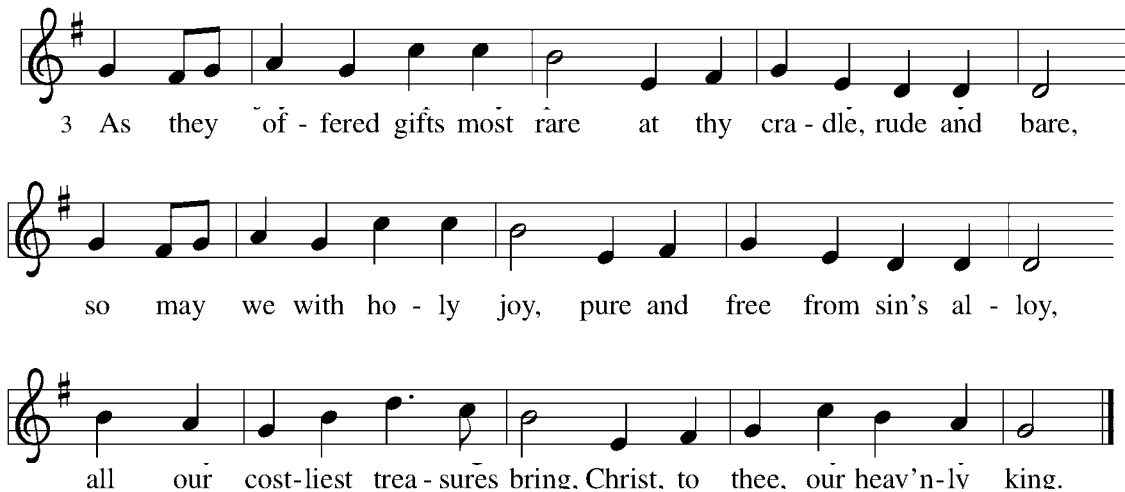
A We pray for all who need healing in any way: *Ellie, Patty Barnes, Connie Coffman, Connie Crowell, Rob Dell, Lisa Kiracofe, Dick Lehman, Brian Matevia, Katie Morris, Andy Proeschel, Dean & Mary Shetter, Helen Winkler,* as well as those whom we name in our hearts (*silent prayer*). Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray,

C Trusting in your mercy, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

OFFERING

ANTHEM: *“As We Gather At Your Table”* *Choir*

OFFERTORY RESPONSE: “As With Gladness” vs. 3 (LBW 82)



3 As they offered gifts most rare at thy cradle, rude and bare,
so may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to thee, our heav'nly king.

Text: William C. Dix, 1837–1898, alt.

Music: DIX, Conrad Kocher, 1786–1872

OFFERTORY PRAYER:

A Merciful Father,
C we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us—ourselves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*HOLY COMMUNION

*THE GREAT THANKSGIVING:



P The Lord be with you. **C** And al - so with you.



P Lift up your hearts. **C** We lift them to the Lord.



P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



C It is right to give him thanks and praise.



Holy Communion

***PREFACE:**



It is indeed right and sal - u - tar - y that we should at all times and in



all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, ho - ly Fa - ther,



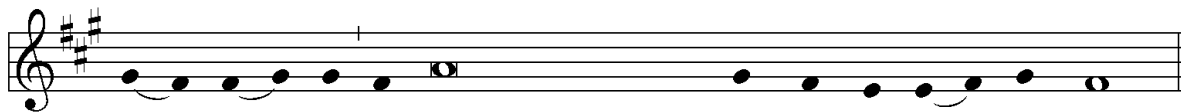
through Christ our Lord. Shar - ing our life, he lived among us to reveal



your glo - ry and love, that our darkness should give way to his

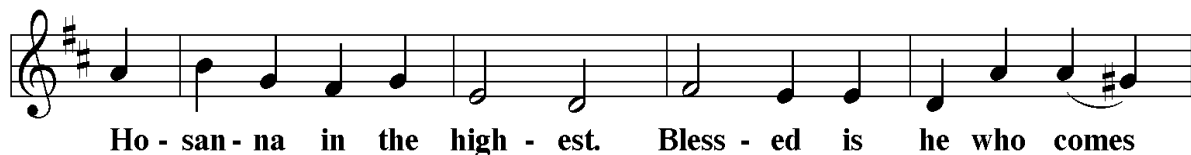


own bril - liant light. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts



of heav - en, we praise your name and join their un - end - ing hymn:

***SANCTUS:**



***WORDS OF INSTITUTION:**

P In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

***LORD'S PRAYER:**

C **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION & BLESSING OF CHILDREN

COMMUNION HYMNS: *“Lamb of God”*



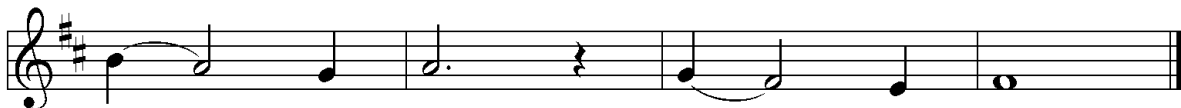
C Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world;



grant us peace, grant us peace.

“Bright and Glorious” (LBW 75)

“I Want to Walk as a Child” (WOV 649)

“Christ Whose Glory Fills the Skies” (LBW 265)

P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C **Amen.**

*POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE:



C Thank the Lord and sing his praise; tell ev-'ry-one what he has done.



Let ev-'ry-one who seeks the Lord re-joice and proud-ly bear his name.



He re-calls his prom-is-es and leads his peo-ple forth in joy



with shouts of thanks-giv-ing. Al-le-lu-ia. Al-le-lu-ia.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER:

P Pour out upon us the spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of those whom you have fed with one heavenly food; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen

*THE BLESSING:



P Almighty God, Father, † Son,
and Holy Spirit, bless you now and for-ever.

C A - men

*SENDING HYMN "Arise, Your Light Has Come" (WOV 652)

*DISMISSAL:

P Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

During the Education hour, **Youth Sunday school will resume regular studies and Adults will meet in the Fellowship Hall for their video review and study: “That the World May Know”** — The Life and Ministry of the Messiah. January 19 will be the 8th and final episode of the 8-part video series presented by Ray Vander Laan. *Enter the world of the Bible and its culture. Learn about historical sites from the life of Christ and discover how the events of the day impacted his life, ministry and communication.*

The Restroom Renovation has begun! Please be aware that the restrooms on the west side of the building are **unusable** until they are complete. After that they will begin the restrooms on the east side.

If you have an article to submit to the **Grace Herald** newsletter, please submit it by ***January 15, 2025.***

HOMELESS SHELTER MEALS

Homeless shelter meals during 2025. There is a **sign-up sheet in the Narthex or you can call Judy Schamel to sign up (937-533-6066).** The board of elders thank you for helping with this very important ministry.

GRACE AT A GLANCE

Grace Lutheran Church

111 Lutheran Dr., P.O. Box 86 - Eaton, OH 45320
Phone: 937-456-6258 Email: GraceEaton111@gmail.com
www.gracelutheranofeaton.com ~ ~ Like us on Facebook

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday -Friday: 10—1, 2—5

- TODAY*** ***January 19, 2025— Second Sunday after Epiphany***
9:30 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion
10:30 a.m. Education for all ages
6:00 p.m. Sunday S'mores
- Monday*** ***January 20—OFFICE CLOSED—MLK, Jr. Day***
Pastor's Day Off
Restroom Remodel
9:45 a.m. TOPS
6:30 p.m. Men's Disciple Group
- Tuesday*** ***January 21—Homeless Shelter Meal: Carol Matevia***
6:00 p.m. Men's Disciple Group
6:00 p.m. VBS Meeting
- Wednesday January 22***
9:00 a.m. Bible Study
6:30 p.m. Choir
- Thursday January 23***
7:30 p.m. AA Meeting (FH)
- Friday January 24***
12:30 p.m. Bulletin Production
- Saturday January 25***

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

Altar Guild for January: Kelly Mt. Castle, Kelly Coffman, Rex Mt. Castle
Offering Counter for January: Susan Kiracofe

Sunday, January 19—Epiphany 2

9:30 a.m.

Greeter: Dorothy Stoltz, Debbie McKinney
Usher: Jeff Kiracofe
Lector: Debbie McKinney
Communion: Tiffany Ingram, Jane Coggin

Sunday, January 26— Epiphany 3

9:30 a.m.

Greeter: Scott & Nancy Parkinson
Usher: Bryan Jackson
Lector: Amy Jackson

Attendance & Stewardship — (\$4,187 needed wkly)

01.12.25 9:30 a.m. 58 \$12,922.38

Great Commission Outreach Partners:

World Mission Prayer League—Chris & Emily and family, Lutheran Military Veterans and Families, Abundant Grace, West Chester

Grace Lutheran Mission Endowment Fund: The purpose of this fund is to extend the ministry of Grace Lutheran Church, apart from the general operation of the congregation. To learn more about our Mission Endowment Fund, please contact the church office and we'll give your question to the appropriate person.

IN OUR PRAYERS

After 4 weeks we will remove names from this list. If you would like to keep someone on the list, please note their name on the back of the "Attendance & Communion Registration" form.

URGENT PRAYER LIST:

PRAYERS OF PRAISE TO GOD:

Karah Woesner's home in California is no longer in the fire Red Flag Zone and that the winds currently are calm.

Clint & family have continued to be safe and fortunately not in any fire zone.

HEALING: (In Alphabetical Order)

Ellie: (Submitted by Kelly Hanson)

Patty Barnes: (She is rehabbing at Reid Hospital)

Connie Coffman: (Diagnosed with the flu)

Connie Crowell: (Recovering from Knee Surgery)

Rob Dell: (Diagnosed pneumonia)

Lisa Kiracofe: (She has recently been diagnosed with breast cancer)

Dick Lehman: (At Kingston of Miamisburg for Rehab after a fall and an infection)

Brian Matevia (Carol's Brother-In-Law as he deals with Prostate cancer and is entering Hospice)

Katie Morris: (Niece of Mary & Dean Shetter—Prayers for complete recovery)

Andy Proeschel: (Brother of Paula Murray—He is now on the transplant list (lung) & will begin testing at Cleveland Clinic)

Dean & Mary Shetter: (Continued prayers for Dean's healing)

Helen Winkler: (Doing rehab at Greenbriar)

LONG-TERM PRAYER LISTMark & Debbie Emrick, Gordon Self, Jackie Steiner, Rhonda Paige Atkinson, Amy Jackson, Andy Proeschel, Jean Bailey, Judy Newkirk, Mike & Judy Schamel, Suzan Pauley, Tim Lanthrop, Barb Goebel, Connie Coffman, Carmen Hasdorff, Ruth Meyer, Martha Grimme, Tom Schamel, Amanda & Shayla Dell, Susan Root, Fran Kester, Teddi & Mike Watkins, Ruth Hardin, Jenifer Combs, Doug Davis, Pastor Dean & Sandy Haferman, Dave Brumbaugh, Scot Emig, Barbara Worley, Carolyn MacFadyen, Judy Jay, Will Suggs, Earl House, Barbara Lakes, Becky Hoskins, Kayli Johnson, Joe McHenry, Tom Barnes: and those serving in the military: Maj. Love Hartman; Capt. John Ketteman; SPC Brandon Mann; Brad Newkirk; Lt. Col. Kyle Hundley, Alex Pollitt, Airman, U.S. Air. Force.

Opportunities for Prayer and Bible Study:

Sunday Morning Adult Education (Jan.)

“That the World May Know” – The Life and Ministry of the Messiah

This is an 8-part video series presented by Ray Vander Laan

Enter the world of the Bible and its culture. Learn about historical sites from the life of Christ and discover how the events of the day impacted his life, ministry and communication.

Adult Bible Studies (during the week)

- ♦ **The Phoebe Women’s Bible Study.** They meet at 7:00 p.m. on the ***2nd Monday of each month.*** Contact Kelly Mt. Castle (937-336-1223 or email: Kelly.mtcastle@gmail.com).
- ♦ On the **Second and the Fourth Tuesdays of the Month:**
 - Wine & The Word** meets at 6:00 p.m. for a light meal (at the home of Carol Perry). They have been viewing ***The Chosen*** and discussing it afterwards. If you would like to join them, please contact Carol at 937-456-6683 or cbperry122@embarqmail.com
 - Lakeside Fellowship** (at the Lakengren home of Dan & Karen Schultz begins at 7:00 p.m. If you would like to join this group, please contact Karen/Dan Schultz at 419-890-7965 or dkschultz52@yahoo.com.
- ♦ **The Wednesday Morning Prayer & Bible Study meets at 9:00 a.m.** in the Meeting Room off of the Fellowship Hall. They are currently studying the Book of ***Ezekiel***. Contact: Judy Hacker (937-456-6823).

These studies are open to any member and our friends. No prior Bible study background is needed. Please bring your Bible.

SAVE THE DATE



Valentine's Day Special

Friday February 14th

Spaghetti & Meatballs with Salad and
Garlic Bread

Dinner Served at **6 p.m.**

Games at **7 p.m.**

Come on out and Join the Fun!!

Desserts are Welcome

Free Rose for the Ladies

You are welcome Guys!

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Second Sunday after the Epiphany – January 19, 2025

*“You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.”*

– Isaiah 62:1–5 –

The prophet Isaiah had quite a lot to say to the people of Judah. In fact, it took him 66 chapters and many years to say it all. Isaiah’s book contains some of the most beautiful and stirring words of the Bible. What he had to say was both good news and bad news. Our reading today gives us glimpse of the good news. Israel was going to be restored. God’s people were, once again, going to be a light to the nations. They were going to be redeemed. They were going to be a royal diadem in God’s hand.

But Isaiah also brought quite a bit of bad news. Restoration was being promised to Israel because destruction was coming first. The faithlessness and idolatry of God’s people was catching up with them. They were going to experience the consequence of their sin and it was not going to be pleasant. They were going to be defeated by their enemies and taken into exile. They were going to taste God’s wrath. Becoming a royal diadem in God’s hands was going to be a radical change, because, at the moment, they thought God had abandoned them.

Most of us would certainly like to get the Good News without the bad news. We’d like it if the Gospel could be summarized as “everything is going to be just fine. Because of Jesus you aren’t going to have any problems ever again.” But that isn’t how it works. The Good News is not that your sin has no consequences. The Good News is not that your sin is no big deal and you don’t need to worry about. Rather, the good news is that God is bringing life out of death, your life out of your death.

As disciples of Christ we do not avoid the darkness in this world. We do not avoid suffering. We do not avoid death. We do not avoid the cross. But the promise we cling to is that God will prevail, God has prevailed, over the darkness, over sin and death. You will be restored. God’s wrath will not burn against you forever because of your sin and faithlessness. God’s final word to you is the word of forgiveness, the word of restoration. The Good News gets the final word, and that Good News is your salvation.