

Advent 2010

Grace Upon Grace

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, Grace Lutheran Congregation seeks to bear witness to the love of God the Father, shown through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by proclaiming the Word, administering the sacraments, and providing loving service to our community.

Grace Lutheran Church

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Pastor's Message

Snow, snow, snow! Nothing really says Christmas like snow on the ground, does it? (Which incidentally makes me think about how they celebrate Christmas in the Southern Hemisphere...) Anyway, I heard the experts were saying that this winter was going to be a bad one, that it is going to make the snow dumps of 2008 look like a warm holiday on the sun's surface (ok, they didn't actually say that, I'm exaggerating a little).

But all this snow brings different news as it falls on different people. For the kids, they're excited to see snow because they can play in it, make snowmen, have snowball fights, slide around on the hills, and do all that snow related stuff. For the teens, they can look forward to all the playing as well but also they can look forward to making some serious coin from their parents and neighbours from shoveling their walks and driveways. For the parents, they can look forward to yet again getting cheap labour out of their kids by paying peanuts to get their walks and driveways shoveled. And for the rest, it could be a little worrisome with

the horrific traffic conditions out there and a city full for people who don't know how to drive in the snow (and some say any other condition, but that's a discussion for another day). So as the forecast calls for more snow, so everyone gets geared up differently. We make sure that we have our thick jackets and long johns out of storage, we check our tires to make sure that they're adequate; we look at our stock of salt and see if our shovels are still in one piece. Although snow brings a lot of fun, there are a lot of things we need to do to prepare for the "not so fun" aspects that snow brings as well. Without a certain level of preparedness we can find ourselves in a dilly of a pickle when the snow actually drops from the sky. You know (and I'm sure all of you saw this coming), Advent is a time of preparing as well. Just as we prepare for the coming winter season and snow, Advent is a time for us to prepare ourselves for the coming Christ. Yes, we probably should be in a constant state of preparation for the second coming of Christ, but Advent is when we remember his *first* coming.

How do we prepare ourselves you ask? We can start by remembering what the Christmas season is all about. We can remember the themes and lessons behind the Christmas stories that we hear. We can remember the reason why Jesus came to the earth in the first place.

Although Christmas brings a lot of things, be it time spent with friends and family, great meals, gifts for all to share, the most important thing that Christmas brings is the promise of our salvation through Jesus Christ, who while maintaining his nature fully as God, also became fully human. In the mystery of the incarnation we are given our freedom and our forgiveness.

In this season of Advent, may we prepare ourselves to celebrate the joy of the coming King, but also remember that we are among our brothers and sisters, all equally loved by the gracious God who created us. May this Christmas spirit live strong throughout this season and for always as we continue living our lives for God alone. Merry Christmas everyone!

Pastor Nathan

A Message from the Chair

Susan Roy

Visioning Session

"We hope that this will be a time to reflect on where we have been and to talk about our goals as we move forward in mission as a congregation..."

Visioning Session

On October 24th we held a Visioning Session after our Sunday worship. We had approximately 18 people in attendance. Although this was a relatively small group, this was a great opportunity for reflection and discussion. Notes from the meeting are posted in the narthex if you'd like to take a look. As well, questionnaires have been put in people's boxes. We encourage you to consider some of the questions. Council and Pastor Nathan find it very helpful to have input and feedback from the congregation. You may choose to complete the questionnaire or have a visit with Pastor Nathan to discuss some of the questions personally. Your involvement is appreciated as we continue to find ways to minister to our community.

Advent is upon us and it truly is a time of preparation in our hearts, homes, and our church. I hope you will take note of some of the activities that will be happening at Grace during this special season.

Some of these include: an Advent choir, a youth-led service, church and tree decorating, the Happiness Group Christmas Luncheon, and our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. And of course, we will meet for worship every Sunday as usual!

Happiness Group

Bonnie Swindells

We meet every Wednesday morning at 10:30. Everyone who is free at that time is most welcome!

We begin the morning with coffee and goodies. Before our Bible study, we pray for our concerns. Then we study the readings for the coming Sunday. Doing this does make the lessons on Sunday morning, so much more meaningful.

After the study, we share fellowship over a lunch that we each bring from home. We do enjoy this time together.

On December 15th, at 10:45 a.m., we are having our annual turkey dinner. The last few years, we have had it catered by Tillie Mueller, who does a super job - supplies everything from coffee, tea and punch to dessert. It's a very traditional turkey dinner. The cost is \$20:00 per person and this even includes Tillie's tip.

As well, there will be an opportunity to donate towards needy families from Maywood School as has been done in the past. Lots of hustle and bustle for a small church!

Council will soon begin looking ahead to the coming year as we start our budgeting process and consider nominations for council positions for 2011. Please consider serving on council. Whether you've participated in the past or are new to this kind of service, we welcome (and need!) your participation.

We meet in the sanctuary for singing and fellowship, then adjourn downstairs at noon, for our meal. As an added bonus this year, the program upstairs will begin with songs sung by our preschool. We are so looking forward to that!

Hope to see many of you there.



Financial Stewardship Report

For The Period Jan. 01 to October 31, 2010

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Variance</u>
Revenue:			
Offerings	53,641	60,125	(6,484)
Rental Income	<u>54,700</u>	<u>54,360</u>	
Total Revenue	<u>108,341</u>	<u>114,485</u>	
Expenses:			
Worship	6,551	8,586	2,035
Education	1,717	2,392	
Building	23,990	29,500	5,510
Personnel	68,044	70,039	
Office	17,785	1,767	
Benevolence	<u>5,500</u>	<u>5,500</u>	
Total Expenses	<u>107,580</u>	<u>117,784</u>	
Net Income (Deficit)	<u>761</u>	<u>(3,929)</u>	

Well what a difference a couple of months make. I am happy to report that the congregation's finances are heading in the right direction. The year to date offerings are now \$6,181 below budget (which is better than the August deficiency amount of \$9,371). Overall there is a net income of \$721 at October 31. Ostensibly this is because some expenditures have not been made in order to conserve cash.

The next two months are going to be very expensive. Building expenditures will include \$2,000 for the insurance appraisal, \$3,600 for the landscaping work and possibly \$7,000 for a new roof on the pre school building.

The insurance renewal of \$6,100 will also be added on December 1. In order to save financing costs it has been decided to pay the whole year's insurance premium on December 1.

While it would be amazing if the offerings received during the next two months could meet all of our needs, realistically a draw down from the savings account will undoubtedly be required.

Shalom Bob Schneider

Deacons

Friede Rohloff

This Sunday on November 28 we will celebrate the first Sunday of Advent with the lighting of the first advent candle. It is a wonderful way to prepare for the great celebration of the birth of our Saviour on Christmas Eve. The next notable date is Saturday December 11. Come one, come all, young and old to decorate the tree and the sanctuary. We will meet at 10 am and ask that all bring a few Christmas goodies to share. On the 3rd Sunday of Advent, Dec 12, the youth will lead the service and share with us their way of preparing for Christmas. On Wednesday December 15 the Happiness Group will host its annual Christmas dinner. For a mere \$20, Turkey dinner with all the trimmings will be served in the Fireside Room at 12, but we will meet at 10:45 in the sanctuary for bible study and entertainment. All are welcome. On December 19 our impromptu choir will sing during the service. And finally our Christmas Eve candlelight service will take place at 7:00 pm on Friday December 24. Come worship with us to celebrate the birth of Christ.



The Board of Governors of Lutheran Theological Seminary is pleased to announce that the Rev. Vern Ratzlaff, Ph.D., Adjunct Professor (non-stipendiary) of Contextual Education at LTS and a retired Mennonite pastor will be awarded the degree of Doctor of Divinity (honoris causa) at the May 2011 Convocation. Dr. Ratzlaff has taught theology, served as a missionary in Egypt, been a parish pastor - most recently in Saskatoon - and for a number of years has taught courses and helped with contextual education placements for our students. Dr. Ratzlaff is a true friend of LTS, a strong ecumenist and a great servant of Christ's Church. Please help us in congratulating him.

PRESCHOOL

Sharon Hamer

Through play, children learn to take appropriate risks and accept challenges while interacting with the environment in a safe manner.

Playing with small toys and puzzles is excellent for small muscle development, classification and memory skills.

Art allows the children to create, be imaginative and manipulate materials in their own way.

Playing in the doll centre allows children to role-play, use their imagination, share and take turns.

Sand & water play allows children to learn spatial and size categorization, learn pouring skills and concepts such as; what sinks and what floats?

Outdoor play develops new skills such as catching, throwing and kicking the balls, climbing and going down the slides.

Grace Lutheran Preschool aims to prepare children for Kindergarten as well as to enhance the lives of children, their families and the community by providing a caring, supportive and vital community service. We strive to achieve this by offering a Christian focused and play based curriculum. The benefit of a play based learning model is receiving renewed attention from childcare specialists and we are encouraged by this appreciation of the type of programming we have been delivering for many years.

You'll recall that last year we celebrated our 35th anniversary of operating as a preschool. This coming year we will celebrate another significant milestone; Teacher Kim Makaseff has dedicated 20 years to serving the board and families of this preschool. Kim started out as a volunteer at the preschool in 1989 and was hired as assistant teacher in January 1990. Four and a half years later, she became Head Teacher and has been providing a valuable service and delivering an excellent program ever since. We will celebrate and honour her

dedication to the program and the community in the new year. Stay tuned.

To give you an appreciation of how highly our preschool is regarded by experts in the field, our Licensing officer stopped by the office after a recent routine inspection of the preschool and commented on how well the program was run. In her words, "The preschool runs itself"; that's quite a compliment and achievement. Well done Kim and Janet! While we struggle with a low enrollment year and with it the anxiety associated with balancing budgets, it is comments such as these that remind me that, though numbers are low, quality is high. This tells me we are achieving one of our main goals, quality care.

Another goal that Teachers Kim and Janet have at this time of year is teaching the children Christmas songs for the Christmas concert which takes place Friday December 17th. You are welcome to stop by the church on that day to hear the angelic voices of the children as they sing; 10:00 start time for the morning class and 12:30 start time for the afternoon class. Or if you're planning to attend the Happiness Group Christmas luncheon, you'll hear the children share a few of their songs at 10:45 AM.



The goal of our preschool is to develop and deliver, with meaningful parental involvement, quality care that meets the needs of the children and parents at reasonable and affordable rates and to continue to be an integral part of the church's outreach to the community.

One song that the children are learning over the course of the year is "Fruits of the Spirit". Each month they learn one of the focus words and by the end of the year they'll know the whole poem/song and words like Love, Joy, Peace and Patience.

Patience is the word of the month for December; quite appropriate as we enter this Advent season and the excitement of Christmas is in the air.



Grace Lutheran Preschool
7283 Nelson Avenue, Burnaby
Operating since 1974

- Kindergarten Readiness
- Morning or Afternoon Classes
- 5 days per week

Children learn social skills and academics through play

Call: 604-433-5155 or 604-433-1515

Ongoing Registration