

Voice of Grace

We are called to proclaim the Word and celebrate the sacraments. We gather in Christian community for nurture and support. We are sent out in service to others.

A Monthly Newsletter

December 2011/January 2012



Mystic Nativity Sandro Botticelli by Susan Reid

Our discussion for our December/January *Voice of Grace* will start with questions rather than information. Some of the questions will be answered later in the article, but others will go unanswered. It is hoped that you will wrestle with them yourself, because the information given later is certainly far from exhaustive. It is also hoped that the questions about the people in the painting might bring you closer to their experiences surrounding Christ's miraculous birth and closer to them as human beings.

We'll be looking at the painting as if it were divided into three sections, the top section being the blue sky and gold dome, the middle section being the manger scene (the magi, by the way, are on the left of the Holy Family, while the shepherds are on the right), and the bottom section containing three angels embracing three people. (To examine enlargements of the details of the painting, find nationalgallery.org.uk on the Internet.)

Questions about the Painting

Questions for section 1: Why is the sky a brilliant blue? Why do the angels seem to be ascending into a gold dome? Why are they being so careless with their crowns? Why are there 12 angels? (A fascinating answer to that question is revealed in an article entitled "Botticelli and the Dark Psychology of The Mystic

Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.



Adult Forum & Sunday School 9:15 a.m.

Nativity," available on the Internet. For once, the angels do not represent the 12 tribes of Israel.)

Questions for section 2: What do you think the three angels on the roof are reading? Why do you think the magi on the left are so plainly dressed? Why do they not bear the usual extravagant gifts? Why are Jesus, Mary, and Joseph out of proportion to the other figures? Why are they so much larger? Mary seems to be worshipping her child, yet baby Jesus reaches out to her in need. Is He hungry? Is He cold? Does He want to be held like any other baby? Why is He separate from His mother? How does Mary feel as her infant reaches imploringly for His mother's embrace? What might she be contemplating or struggling with? One art historian suggested that Joseph is asleep, but could his pose be expressing something else? If he is not asleep, what might he be thinking? Does the cave that the roof above the manger supports remind you of anything else?

Questions for section 3: Who are these people whom the three angels embrace? Are they sharing the jubilation of the event, or are the angels comforting or re-assuring some of them? If the humans are upset, what might be the cause? Do you see the little demons in this section? Why did Botticelli include them?

Information about the Painting

Those of you who are familiar with Botticelli's two most famous works, Primavera and Birth of Venus, may see a disturbing difference in the painter's style and palette in this much later Mystic Nativity. The women in Primavera and Birth of Venus have some of the most beautiful, delicate faces in all art, and their bodies are graceful and sensuous, clothed in diaphanous pastel gowns.

Many times when we observe such radical contrasts in a painter's style, it is because the less characteristic and less popular works were painted early in the painter's career, when he or she had not yet matured in skill or personal aesthetic. But in this painting, we find just the opposite. This is one of Botticelli's latest paintings. During the last 15 years of his life, Botticelli's work appeared to undergo a crisis in style and expression.

The 1490s was a turbulent decade; the Medici had been expelled from Florence and Italy's peace disrupted by invasion and plagues. The impending year 1500 marked a millenium and a half after Christ's birth, and a belief in the imminence of the Second Coming predicted in the Book of Revelation pervaded the minds of many pious Florentines. Botticelli's picture has long been called the Mystic Nativity because of its mysterious symbolism. It combines Christ's birth as told in the New Testament with a vision of His Second Coming as promised in the Book of Revelation. Christ's return to earth would herald the end of the world and the reconciliation of devout Christians with God, but it would include judgment and tribulation.

Botticelli rejected the ornamental beauty and charm of his earlier work in favor of a more simplistic approach that seemed crude and heavy-handed in contrast. These later paintings contained distinct moral and religious overtones. Many of his works datable to this period seem to be imbued with the same spiritual tension as Mystical Nativity, which some scholars have attributed to Botticelli's exposure to the fanatical Dominican preacher Savonarola. In any case, Botticelli has

deliberately reverted to the old-fashioned, non-realistic differences in scale to emphasize the importance of certain figures. For instance, the Mary and Jesus dwarf the other figures. There is also an inscription at the top of the painting, partly erased, forecasting the end of the present troubled world and the beginning of a new order.

The 12 angels rejoice against a very blue sky. But the dome of the sky is gold, suggesting the timeless, untarnished nature of Heaven and certainly the glory of the world to come. Yet the sky connects earth with Heaven, the temporal with the eternal. The angels offer their crowns to the true Queen of Heaven, Mary, the mother of our Lord.

In the bottom section we see why Mystic Nativity is often described as a "double" painting, because it actually combines themes of a traditional nativity with themes of a last judgment painting. Far below Botticelli's swirl of angels, demonic figures can be seen, not traditional visitors to a nativity scene. By including these last judgment elements, Botticelli seeks to encourage the contemplation of not only Christ's arrival in the world as an infant, but also his eventual return as outlined in the Book of Revelation, thus masterfully creating a sense of both joy and apocalyptic foreboding.

A Post Script: As many of you know, this will be my last article for Voice of Grace. I'm moving to Reno, where I'll be spending many more hours reading Winnie-the-Pooh to my grandchildren than art history books. I want to thank you all for enduring my oftentimes overly long ramblings, and also for your many expressions of appreciation. Religious art was a powerful tool the Holy Spirit used to bring me from a state of near-atheism to Christianity. So thank you for giving me the opportunity to explore this strange passion of mine and bring me closer to the life of our Lord. I also wish to express my gratitude to Lucy and Jim Hladecek for the outstanding quality of our monthly newsletter. I've never seen anything like it in any other



church. To Lucy, I am grateful for some thought-provoking conversations related to my articles, the hours of editing, and for putting up with my stubborn dislike of modern punctuation rules, including my (evidently) antiquated insistence that the pronouns used for our Lord and our God be capitalized. To Jim, I owe a debt for his extreme patience with my "deadline difficulties," but—much more than that—for his continual praise for, and encouragement of, my amateur efforts. I will miss you all so much. I cannot imagine another group that so faithfully serves as God's hands.

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. --Susan



Advent Soup Supper & Holden Evening Prayer

This year Grace Lutheran will again host the tasteful and worshipful Advent soup suppers and Holden Evening Prayer. The tasteful part begins each Wednesday evening of Advent, (November 30, December 7, 14 & 21) at 6:00 p.m. with a soup supper. Sign up in the kitchen to help bring soup. If you don't bring soup, bring some bread or light dessert to share. All are welcome. Consider inviting your friends and neighbors to these events; they are a great introduction to our congregation and Lutheran worship. The food is delicious and the fellowship is wonderful. The worshipful part of the evening begins at 7:00 p.m. with Holden Evening Prayer. This is a beautiful musical evening prayer service written for Holden Village, the Lutheran Camp and Retreat Center in northeastern Washington.

Our theme this year is "Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel." We will sing different verses of that hymn each week. Each Wednesday service will feature a short vignette, written by a member of Grace, that reflects on the thoughts and experiences of a person present at Christ's birth. We will hear from a shepherd, the innkeeper's wife, from Mary, the mother of Jesus and from Joseph. Please come and join us and make this part of your Advent season.

Be born again into our hearts this Christmas season,
we need you Jesus, please come and forgive us again,
fill us with your grace.

Fill us with hope,
give us the ability to dream
and rejoice in your coming again
to restore all of creation.

Help us to serve those in need this season of thankfulness
may we see you in all we meet.

Be with all those who are in need or sad
or ill or grieving, may they know your peace and
healing.

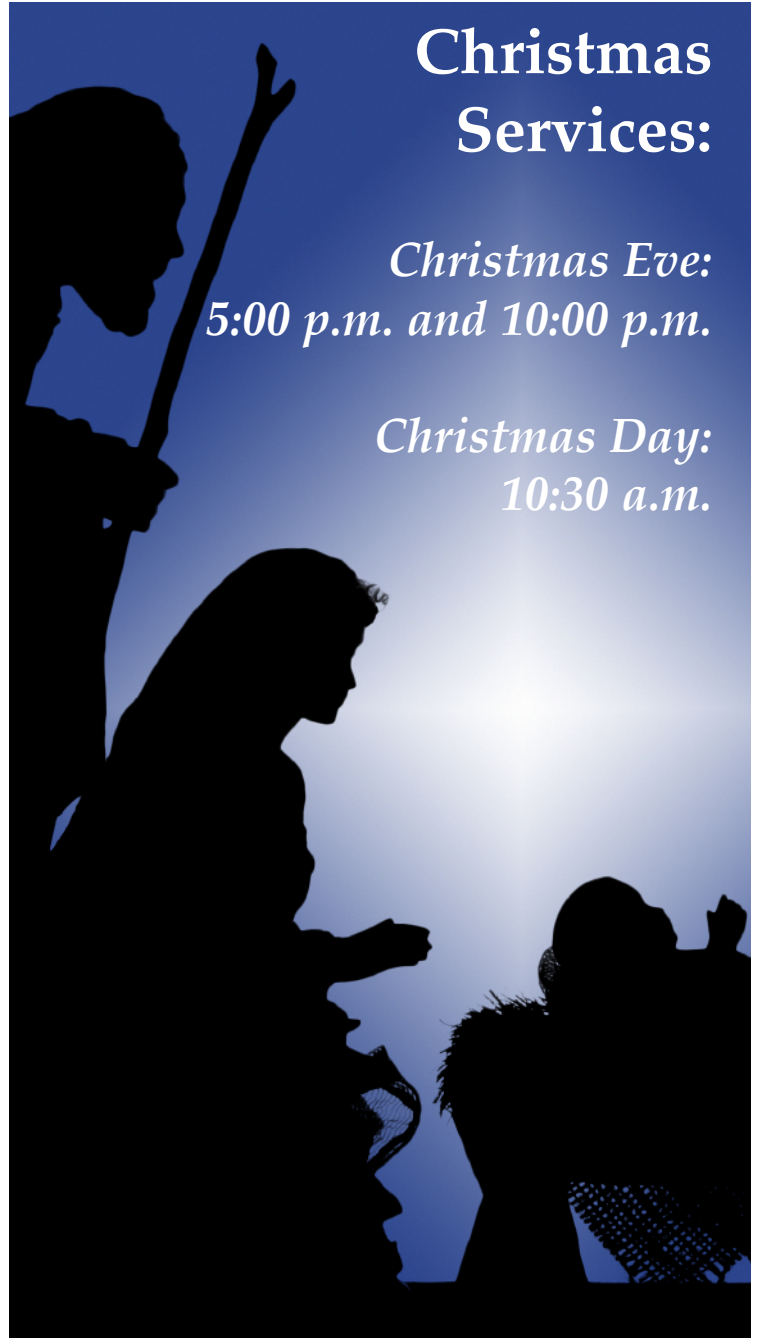
Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

Amen.

Christmas Services:

*Christmas Eve:
5:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.*

*Christmas Day:
10:30 a.m.*



Notice:

Endowment Award Guidelines Available

The endowment committee of Grace Lutheran Church will be reviewing applications for grants. Members who wish to apply for a grant for a church project/mission may submit an application to the committee no later than December 31.

Guidelines for the application are available at the church office. Further information can be obtained from committee members: Jim Hladecek, Susan Reid, Diane Threlkeld and Pastor Coe.

Quilting Warming the World One Quilt at a Time

by Neil Potthoff

Different strokes for different folks. We have found that churches differ in how they produce quilts for Lutheran World Relief. Some do the whole process at one site on a particular day of the week. Others “farm out” the various tasks involved and from time to time have tying sessions. Here at Grace we focus on the former, believing there is a great deal of fellowship value in the enterprise. Over the years we have developed something of a mass production model with several distinct phases.

Dept.1: Cutting – Our material (depending on size and pattern) is cut into 11” square blocks or strips from 4” to 10” wide.

Dept. 2: Design – The cut pieces are then formed into an attractive arrangement planned to yield a 60” X 80” finished quilt (LWR desired size).

Dept. 3: Stitching – The pieces are then sewn together with ½” seam allowance.

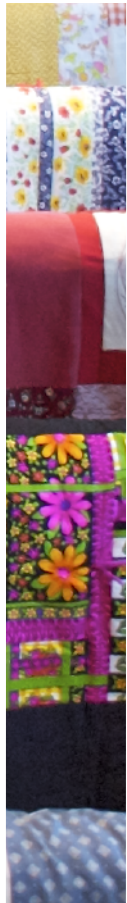
Dept. 4 Pressing – Seams are pressed flat both during the stitching and in finishing the top. Pressing also includes ironing the finished backs and any material needing it prior to cutting.

Dept. 5: Making backs – This primarily involves tearing or cutting serviceable sheets into backing measuring 66” X 86”. Large pieces, including pillow cases, are often sewn together so we don’t waste material.

Dept. 6: Assembly – The patterned top, batting, and back are laid out, an appropriate yarn color is selected, knots are tied at intervals to secure the batting, the edges are turned and the quilt is returned to stitching for the edge finishing.

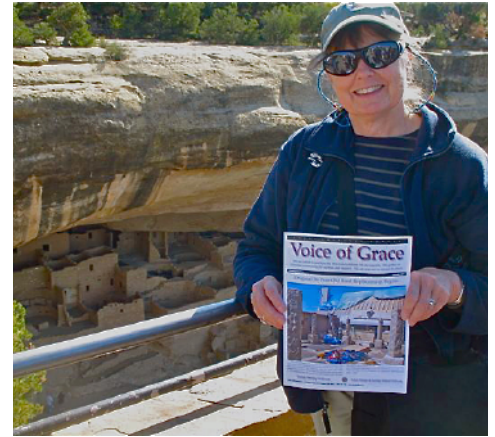
Dept. 7: Blessing, packing, shipping, and a few sales – Twice a year LWR has regional “in-gatherings” to organize the quilts for shipment to their national warehouse in Baltimore. Following the blessing, we pack five to seven quilts into manageable cartons, and some good-hearted soul takes them to Seattle. We offer some quilts for sale every year, because, while most of the fabrics and backing materials are donated, the batting and shipping require a cash outlay of \$700-750 a year. Sales are our primary income source; however, some years we have been able to obtain Thrivent funds. It is not unusual for us to produce 120 or so quilts per year.

If you are unable or just prefer not to attend our Monday sessions, there are some tasks that can be done at home, such as cutting material and sewing tops. If you would like to participate, contact us and we will be glad to prepare a suitable kit for you. People may also donate fabric for the tops and/or new or lightly used sheets for backs.



Voice of Grace: World Tour

Recently, Keith and Catherine White traveled to Colorado (along with a copy of the *Voice of Grace*) and visited Mesa Verde. In this photo, taken by Keith, Catherine shares another exciting vacation spot with our well-traveled newsletter.



Men’s Breakfast



Coffee, juice, egg dishes and, of course, Jim Little’s scrumptious pancakes started the men’s breakfast on Saturday, November 12. Men from Grace and four other neighboring churches gathered for food, fellowship, singing and prayer at 8:00 a.m.

The highlight of the morning was the opportunity to visit with our friend, Pastor Bruce VanBlair, who participated as the guest speaker for the morning and shared a very moving story of his personal walk of faith.

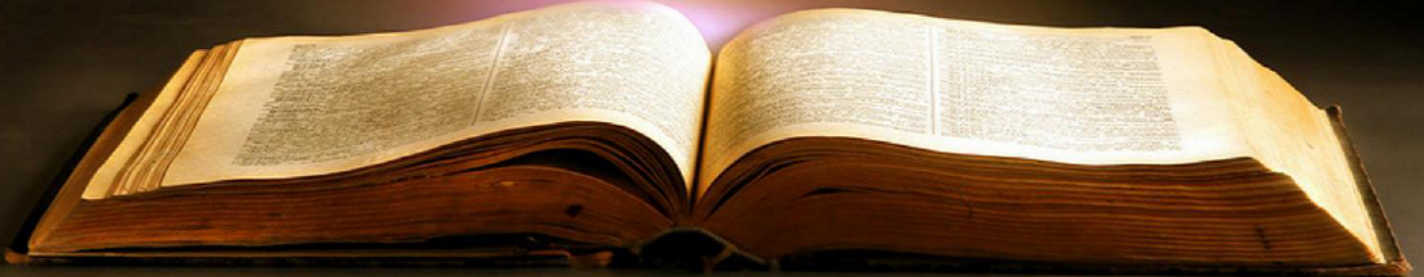


Want to Sing?

The Grace Lutheran Choir is searching for additional voices. If you enjoy music and enjoy singing, contact our choir director, Colleen Johnson, or any member of the choir. Don’t hesitate to add your voice to the Lord through our very own Grace choir.

My Faith Journey

by Linda Wolff



Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen (Hebrews 11:1).

Have faith in the Lord and He will take care of you (2 Chronicles 20:20).

The title "Faith Journey" first led me to start thinking about my times within the Church and other Christian activities that had to do with worship, prayer and Bible study. I then began to think about it being a journey, which, after all, is a trip. Where are you going? How do you get there? What do you need? How long will it take? Who else is going? Then, of course, I needed to "Google" Faith Journey. This did not help, since all these stories were of people having such outstanding (good and bad) things that happened to them. Not my story.

I then started brainstorming and designing an acrostic for faith, anything to keep from beginning my story!

F Father, Forever, Forgive, Family, Foundation, Feast, Fire, Fulfill, Follower, Fellowship, ...

A Advisor, Amaze, Abide, Absolve, Acclaim, Accept, Alleluia, Adore, Awesome, Almighty, ...

I Immaculate, Immanuel, Identity, Ideal, Inspire, Invisible, Immortal, Invocation, Intercessor, ...

T Trust, Truth, Trinity, Testimony, Treasure, Throne, Teacher, Thankful, Transfiguration, Triumph, ...

H Heaven, Hymn, Heart, Holy, Host, Hope, Humble, Health, Home, Honor, Happy, ...

Writing this article has been a challenge but also an opportunity for me to examine my faith and how I have grown as a Christian. It has been a time to pray, to study and to reflect. It has also been a time to grow in my relationship with God and an opportunity to follow Jesus, not my own wishes and desires.

As a child, I attended a Sunday School at a community church with other children from my class. My mother and father did not belong or go to church but made sure that my brother and I could attend if we wanted to. I also went to Vacation Bible School and summer Bible camp with friends and enjoyed learning the Bible stories, singing songs and playing games. It was a fun time and gave me some ideas about Christian life, but it was a dependent faith. It was a faith that

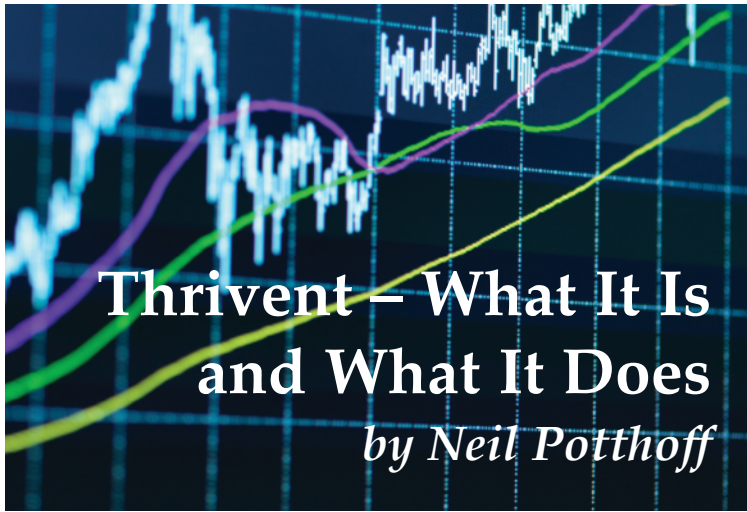
was taught and accepted without thinking or questioning. The people were always caring, helpful and encouraging. Prayer, worship and study were just part of how to do things.

As an undergraduate I was required to take a religion class which was supposed to help our spiritual growth. This class did just the opposite for me. It did not answer my questions and concerns but rather left me confused and floundering.

When I met Harlan, a good Lutheran, we started going to Church. We were married in the Lutheran Church even though I was not a member. In the pre-marital counseling the pastor told us that if we did not join a church within a year, we probably would never do so. Since Harlan was working in Port Townsend at Crown Zellerbach Paper Company, I attended a teacher recruitment meeting at UPS with none other than Neil Potthoff and Gael Stuart. I was hired with an emergency certificate to teach first grade. I taught in the primary building with Marty Haugen, custodian, father figure and friend. Marty encouraged me to attend Grace, but Grace was Missouri Synod, and an ALC or LCA Lutheran would not even consider a Missouri Synod Church, so we went to several local churches before finally coming to Grace. We found that Grace Lutheran had many members from a number of Lutheran Synods. We, of course, were warmly welcomed. I was baptized and joined Grace Lutheran Church and have happily been a member ever since.

Through worship, prayer, study and teaching here at Grace, I began my journey to an independent or owned faith. Teaching Sunday School has really helped or pushed me on this journey. The old saying that the teacher learns more than the student is certainly true. Just having the correct answers about Christ is not enough. Faith is so much more than facts and stories. Faith is a gift from God. God wants us to live in faith. When we live in faith, we are blessed. We need to live our lives so that others can see the power of God working in us and in our lives.

My faith journey continues as a journey of ongoing dependence on God. It is a journey of thanksgiving, praising God for his abundant love and his steadfast presence in sorrow, despair, and fear.



Thrivent Financial for Lutherans was the name chosen for the fraternal company that formed from the merger several years ago of the Aid Association for Lutherans and Lutheran Brotherhood, both purveyors of a wide variety of insurance and investment products. IRS rules require fraternal companies to make annual charitable distributions of a portion of their profits. Thrivent does this in part by continuing the tradition of using local chapters for the Care in Communities phase, in part by the Choice Dollars program, and in part by national member vote on national charities. Anyone holding a Thrivent product is automatically a chapter member, but not every member gets Choice Dollars to assign. We are blessed in that most of our Thrivent folk have designated theirs to Grace church. Eligibility for these is determined by a formula based on the product held, premiums paid, investment yield, and other factors. Choice Dollars are allocated electronically to our Thrivent Equity Account every month and only the donor is notified as to his/her amount. The church gets the donor list and a total amount. Distribution is determined by our Thrivent members. During this year our Choice Dollars, along with some matching money, have gone to the food bank, pencil box ministry, quilters for batting and shipping, organ repair fund, and restroom upgrades. Matching fund events enable us to receive additional money from the annual Care in Community allotment to local chapters for the funding of off-budget community needs. Because we have been somewhat aggressive in promoting matching funds events, we have obtained a considerable amount from our chapter over the years (be at the table when dinner is served!) Thrivent people in our geographical area (church-goers or not) are members of the Clallam-Jefferson chapter and all business is conducted by an elected

board of directors. Currently, Mark Dembro serves as vice president and Jan Schroeder as secretary. There are no general meetings of members, and individual church groups are free to meet as they wish. Each church has congregational advocates who promote the best interests of the congregation to Thrivent. Ours are Jeni Little and Neil Potthoff, who award our congregation five gold stars for their consistent generous support. Many thanks!

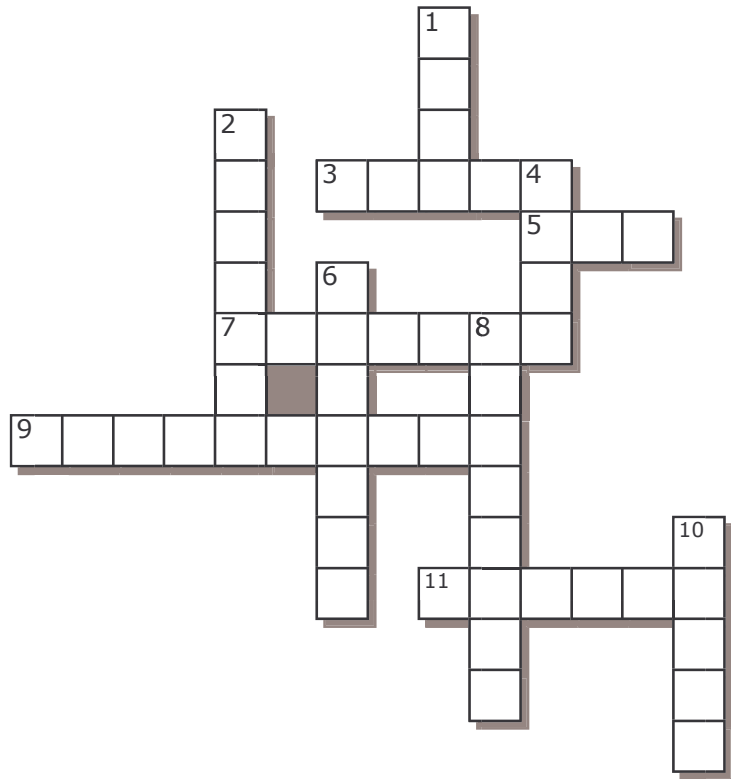
Church Mice

Karl Zorowski



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Grace Crossword



Across

- 3) plate for holding bread during Eucharist
- 5) a white vestment worn by clergy and servers in some Christian churches
- 7) a large cup or goblet
- 9) formal release from guilt
- 11) a raised platform or lectern in a church

Down

- 1) the bread consecrated in the Eucharist
- 2) part of church near altar reserved for clergy and choir
- 4) the central part of a church building
- 6) an antechamber or large porch
- 8) girdle or belt
- 10) a strip of fabric worn over the shoulders and hanging down to the knee or below

Imagine Meeting You Here!



by Lois Ward

Editor's Note: Lois Ward, the author of this article, is a new member at Grace Lutheran Church. She is the editor of a very special newsletter titled, "Gleamings," in which she writes her own column and shares excerpts and quotations from her reading and research, "gathered during the golden hours of the day." You may receive a copy of "Gleamings" by asking Lois or subscribing via email at lwgleamings@comcast.net.

A year ago, when I mentioned to church friends and neighbors from Longmont our plan to move, the first question was usually, "Where?" I had never seen Port Townsend but had been told it was a nice *small* town. So I was surprised at how many responses were "Oh, my ... lives there," or "I think that is such a lovely town," or "we've visited there and I'd love to go back." Everyone but I seemed to know Port Townsend. But I'm learning to appreciate so many things about it.

I had a very special treat when my daughters, their friends and I drove to the very impressive Olympic Music Festival concert performed by a fine quartet in a remodeled barn on a historic farm a few weeks ago. At the intermission, daughter Ellen suddenly left her seat to hurry outside to the surrounding lawns where she had spotted former neighbors from Durham, N.C., now living a few miles from us.

Next encounter? My daughter-in-law Ann, a pastor in Marshall, MN, was conferring with the relative of a just-deceased member about funeral plans for the member and discovered that the visiting relative lived in Port Townsend. Then, another coincidence: the visitor has been a massage-therapist colleague of daughter Vicki here in Port Townsend and graduated from St. Olaf College (MD) as did my son.

We sang this verse at Girl Scout camp:

Make new friends ... but keep the old!

One is silver, the other gold!

If you haven't had a surprise re-meeting lately, surprise an old friend with a card or letter. Brighten a day – keep the gold!

**"Brighten a Day,
Keep the Gold!"**



Mark your calendar for Friday, January 13, at 6:30 p.m. for a special showing of the recent comedy, *Evan Almighty*.

Reviewer, Jason Buchanan, describes the film as follows:

"Shortly after television anchorman-turned-U.S. congressman Evan Baxter (Steve Carell) relocates his family from Buffalo to Northern Virginia, God (Morgan Freeman) reveals to



him that a devastating flood is coming and the planet is about to be cleansed once again. Later, when Baxter accepts the responsibility of building a great ark and his rapidly changing physical appearance begins to draw media attention, his skeptical family attempts to discern if his actions are driven by delusion or divine intervention. John Goodman, Wanda Sykes, Jonah Hill, and Molly Shannon co-star in a divine comedy of truly epic proportions."

The filmmakers have managed to make a truly entertaining film that invites viewers to contemplate the rather big idea that we're all "chosen" to be in relationship with – and obedient to – our Creator. It is also reported that this is the most expensive comedy ever produced. The total cost is rumored to be around \$200 million.

This is a film that all members of the family will enjoy. As usual, Grace Cinema (fellowship committee) will be providing popcorn and soft drinks. Come and enjoy the film with full surround-sound and big screen.



From Our Pastor: "Advent"

Those four weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas—what do they mean to you? I would like to offer an alternative for the season that we Christians call Advent. This alternative views Advent as a time for reflection, refocusing, refreshment and renewal. This alternative allows us to take a deep breath and sigh with relief. This is in contrast to the popular point of view that sees this as a time of overspending, overeating, overpartying and just plain over doing. For many folks, the more we hear about how happy we are supposed to feel, the sadder we actually get. The expectations are so big and yet the meaning of the parties and eating and drinking and spending can often be so shallow. We don't need to live up to those expectations—I invite you to a different Advent.

This different Advent focuses on reflecting on the coming of Christ in three ways. First, we remember the birth of Christ 2,000 years ago. What does that mean to you? Consider starting a journal this Advent season in which you write down your thoughts on some of the questions in

this article. I think of the birth of Christ as so wonderful it is hard to believe. God, the creator of the universe, cared enough about his creation to become part of it. God "set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave (or servant) and became human." That means God understands what our life is like because He lived it! We can pray to God about our life and all that we go through and know that God understands. The author of the Book of Hebrews explains, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." During Advent, remember the gift of God becoming human for us.

Second, we reflect on, and pray for God coming into our life today. I need God every day—whether I admit it or not. You see, occasionally I begin to feel pretty confident in myself. I begin to think I actually have my act together and am on a roll. I begin to think I can do this—whatever it is I am doing—including being a pastor. Usually about that time my sinfulness, fallibility and frailty come rushing back into my life. I realize (again) that I say things I shouldn't and do things I shouldn't. I remember that I am still human and have an amazing ability to mess things up. I remember that I NEED A SAVIOR. I need forgiveness, I need mercy, I need grace and I need it TODAY. Come, Lord Jesus! Come into my heart and life today, I need you. You need Jesus too! That is our second Advent reflection.

And third, we look forward to the end of time, when Christ will return and God's redemption will be completed in our lives and in all creation. On that day, the sinfulness and brokenness of all creation will be healed. Sin will finally come to an end, our redemption will be complete and God will wipe every tear from our eyes. Oh, what a day that will be. Come, Lord Jesus, come!

During Advent I invite you to reflect on these three comings of Christ. Find a time each day or at least every other day for some quiet time. During that time reflect on what these three comings of Christ mean to you. Use this time to sink deep spiritual roots into the good soil that Jesus provides. These roots will sustain you through the droughts and storms of the year to come.

You might consider the following additional questions during these times of reflection.

- What is your most painful memory from the past year and how has it impacted your life? Offer this painful memory prayerfully to God.
- What are you most grateful for over the past year? Give thanks to God.
- What has been the most spiritually significant event in your life this past year?
- How have you grown spiritually in this past year
- Where have you experienced or recognized God in the pain, the joy and the growth?
- How can you share the love of God with those less fortunate.

Try some of these things, reflect on these questions or ideas. Find the time and God will renew you; then, share this renewal and love with those around you. You might even check out this video from group called Advent Conspiracy; go to www.adventconspiracy.org and click on the video in the upper right hand corner.

This is my prayer for this Advent season. May God bless each of you with His grace and peace.

*Heavenly Father, during this season of preparation
give us a sliver of understanding
of what you have done for us,
of how much you love us.*

*God Bless,
Pastor Coe*

¹ Philippians 2:7, *The Message*.

² Hebrews 4:15-16, NRSV.

³ Many of these ideas were inspired by *Waiting for the Light*, an Advent devotional compiled by Susan Wade, Ricci Kilmer and Christine Sine. Mustard Seed Associates: 2011.

From Our President: "Risk Management"



The catalyst for this article comes from the sermon by Pastor Coe Hutchison on November 13, 2011. The sermon was based on Matthew 25:14-30. It was about a man who was going on a journey and entrusted his property to his slaves. One guy got five talents, another, two and another, one. You know the parable. The guy comes home and two of the slaves did pretty well with his money but the last guy buried the money and the master only broke even at best. I'm not so sure I wouldn't have done the same in this economy!

Pastor Coe spoke of taking risks. The two men who did well had to take some risk with the master's money and they did well, while the last slave chose not to risk anything and keep him self out of trouble. There was no guarantee that the two men who invested or whatever they did would make a profit by doing what they did. But they did the best they could.

In the corporate world some risk management is expected. I think there are different types of risk such as calculated risk – you know the odds of something going right, or the odds may be totally against you, so you can proceed accordingly. In contrast, there are foolish risks such as a dare-devil would do, e.g., going over Niagara Falls in a barrel.

I think Jesus expects us to take reasonable risks for him. We take a risk when we enter into a conversation about Christ with someone we know or someone we don't know very well. Will I say the right words? Will I only make it more difficult for this person to know Jesus? All kinds of things can happen. These are questions we ask ourselves and wrestle with.

Grace Lutheran Church takes risks. Just this fall we decided to put a new roof on the church. We moved forward, trusting the Lord would walk us through this project and we would be able to raise the funds to pay for it. Well, that sure was the case. We raised the money in just a few weeks. It may have been a risk to jump into a big project like that, but we did and the rewards were great. We have a roof that should keep us warm and dry for years to come.

I think one of the best approaches to taking a risk is to use the power of prayer. When we stop and pray and let the Spirit into our decision-making, everything seems to make more sense and we feel more confident that He will lead us in the right direction.

I have taken a risk by writing this article, and I pray that this will encourage others to take reasonable risks such as sharing one's faith, or perhaps considering a position on the church council, or reaching out to someone who is hurting. There is no shortage of risks to be taken, so help yourself.

Yours in Christ

James K. Espens



Have You Shared Your Faith in Christ Today?



This issue of the *Voice of Grace* was to mark the last article by Susan Reid. Susan announced that she is leaving Port Townsend and Grace Lutheran Church to live closer to her family in Reno, Nevada. It was with a heavy heart that many in the congregation greeted that news, since Susan is a beloved member and, over the years, has shared many great articles on the subject of Christian art. We have come to look forward to those articles.

We are happy to report that Susan Reid will continue to be a contributor to the *Voice of Grace*! As soon as she moves to Reno she will be opening a branch office which will be known as the Reno Desk! Future articles will be coming from Susan through the Reno Desk as she becomes our first *Voice of Grace* "foreign correspondent."

Church Council

President: Jim Espenson
espenson@cablespeed.com

Vice President: Roberta Bymers

Secretary: Linda Cooley

Ministers:

Resources (Treasurer): Anne Argites

Facilities: Dave Peterson

Worship/Music: David Gaenicke

Stewardship: Mark Dembro

Community Concerns & Social Ministry: Bob Threlkeld

Congregational Concerns & Fellowship: Floyd Thompson

Church Staff

Pastor: Rev. Coe Hutchison
pastorcoeh@gmail.com
cell 206-369-0606

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