

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.



Let there be peace on earth....

*Worship -Sundays, 10:30 a.m and
Online at gracelutheranpt.org*



December 2021 / January 2022

Grace Lutheran Church, 1120 Walker Street, Port Townsend, WA 98368 - (360) 385-1595 www.gracelutheranpt.org

In Midweek Holden Evening Prayer services this Advent, Pastor Sean gave some prompts for writing exercises in responses to the Scripture readings.

Week 1: Haiku - Based on Isaiah 35:8-9 ("The Holy Road"):

*Only friendly meetings
Not a bump in this road
God is looking out for us*

*Afternoon darkness
Shadowed drizzle continues
We wait and watch now*

*It is a long road
But travelers are safe
Come and follow the Lord
He will care for you!*

*Now, dust gone from feet
New road leads me toward my home
Jump, sing, laugh, now home!*

*Road for holy travel
God's people to travel onward
Faith*

*No fools on this road
No dangers or wild animals
Only the redeemed walk this road*

*Roads lined with velvet
The cars all have little crowns
No getting lost here*

*Holy Road
God's People
No danger*

*Embrace Holy Road
Do not resist nor get lost
Relax in the now*

*Safe travels for all
Journey with kindness, respect, love
Our compass is trust*

*Peaceful road of God
Sure-footed pathway of Light
Smooth voyage of love*

*Really quite a road
Unlike any I've taken
Most relaxing ride*

*Gravel, snow, sand, mud
Footsteps of love carry me
Steps toward God with God*

*Road unlike others
Blessed path assures safe passage
In good company*



Decorating the tree at Grace.

Pastor's Message

"Remember the children," the bright orange banner proclaims in our sanctuary.

When introducing it on a Sunday, I read an excerpt from the July 23 letter of the American Indian Alaska Native Lutheran Association to the ELCA which asked us to hang an orange banner in our worship spaces for 225 days, a number symbolic of the total of mass graves revealed at the Kamloops Residential School in British Columbia earlier that month. When sharing that letter and request with our worship committee, my heart was warmed by the welcome response to honoring that request. I applaud Dee Dee Norman in particular for quickly preparing the banner and for keeping me accountable for remembering the children in prayer.

I have been asked to say more about the display and its significance. You might wonder ... we all recognize the evil and the injustice that is attached to taking children from their homes against their will, suppressing their cultural heritage and creating an environment in which far too many (and one is too many) could be killed and forgotten. But what does it mean for us today other than to find it all very sad that such things occurred?

The AIANLA letter notes that "many Tribal nations have had church groups offer apologies on behalf of their ancestors, which is well and good, but that only serves to assuage any feelings of guilt or shame for them and does not bring about true repentance."

That call to repentance is a call to go deeper. To go beyond the formal apologies the ELCA and other church bodies that operated or supported residential schools have offered in recent years and take action to learn from tragic and painful history.

In Galatians 3:28, the apostle Paul writes that "there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." This verse is a perfect example of the now-and-not-yet nature of Christ's kingdom. It is a vision of equity among God's people of which we have seen glimpses but remains to be realized in its fullness. I think that too often we are apt to skip to the ending, to fast-forward Trail through the process that leads to reconciliation between privileged and oppressed groups in our society and act as if saying it's all OK now makes it OK. Rather, the button we should press is "pause," so that we can listen and let the words of those who have been sinned against be heard and sink in.

The years I spent in Montana caused me to see the indigenous inhabitants of the land who seemed almost invisible to me growing up on Whidbey Island. In Big Sky Country, American Indians are the second-largest ethnic group and the history of settlement and broken treaties and ongoing tension between communities is ever-present. In Western Washington, it had seemed more as if native peoples were than are. We got a basic rundown in school on state history and ubiquitous place names felt like more of a remembrance than a present reality.

When I arrived to meet the call committee here at Grace, I noticed the čičmāhán Trail signs immediately and the land acknowledgment plaque at the Northwest Maritime Center. I appreciated that the Port Townsend community has taken the time to reflect on relationships with the S'Klallam people and made commitments to do better going forward.

The letter from the AIANLA has caused me to seek out the ongoing story behind the remains of children still being found at residential school sites, now that the initial headlines have faded. If I hadn't, I would have missed the development in November of identifying 102 of the children who perished at a school in Nebraska as recently as 1934. To "remember the children," I feel compelled to first get to know some of their story as it pertains to us closer to home.

The University of Washington Libraries documented interviews with former students of the Chemawa Indian School that took in children from as far as Alaska at its site in Forest Grove, Oregon. As many as 70 children tried to run away from Chemawa and return home. "Punishment of runaways was usually harsh, as the offenders became examples held up before their fellow students," anthropologist Carolyn Marr wrote, adding that in an interview, Helma Ward of the Makah Tribe told her "two of our girls ran away ... but they got caught. They tied their legs up, tied their hands



see next page

behind their backs, put them in the middle of the hallway so that if they fell, fell asleep or something, the matron would hear them and she'd get out there and whip them and make them stand up again."

At Chemawa, about 50 of the 275 children who died there through the 1930s still remain unaccounted for and there are efforts to try to identify them from among about 40 sets of remains. In the meantime, the hurt of not knowing remains with many of their relatives.

I have heard from members of Grace about the excellence of the Makah Museum which remains closed for now due to COVID-19. I do not know if any of the residential schools' history is covered there but I look forward to someday witnessing all it has to offer once the pandemic has ended. I also pledge to dive deeper into what scant information I have found thus far in regards to specifically Lutheran-operated schools, like the Lutheran Mission School in Gresham, Wisconsin, where former student Dorothy Davids recalled being whipped as a punishment and that "they tried to erase us. ... They tried to make us into something else."

These are hard histories to read but I encourage us as Lutheran Christians to seek better understanding of the past so we can take steps that lead to healing and meaningful reconciliation in the future. This is a topic which we will spend some time on in the 9:15 Christian Education hour in the New Year. May Christ ever be our help and our guide as we journey toward greater understanding and compassion.

In peace,

Pastor Sean



Childrens' sermon, Christmas Eve service.

The Invited

by Linda Gaenicke

Growing up in Milwaukee, our home was always full of people. Anyone was welcome just for a visit or a meal. My grandmother was a great cook, and people loved to be invited to join us for a holiday or special event meal.

It was a home where people came and went without invitations; just open the door and walk in. They knew they would be welcome without an invitation.

Holidays found our home full of neighbors, family and people who had nowhere to go to celebrate. We never knew how many were coming, but more room was always made at the table for just one more person.

After a meal and dessert, hours were spent with discussions, brandy, wine, and laughter that went into the late night. That was the important part—the fellowship.

Years later while living in Germany, we celebrated a birthday, Thanksgiving and the first Sunday in Advent in one day. We had 13 people staying with us that weekend. While guests rested after the meal, David helped me decorate for Advent and we had all the decorations up in time to light the first candle before the Advent cookies were on the table.

Remembering the past, I recall that we are invited every Sunday for a meal. We are all the invited. During the Covid 19 months, communion has changed for us. Instead of coming to the altar, we now sit in the pews, open our little plastic containers with the tiny wafer and grape juice inside. Take and eat. Take and drink. At first, I struggled with the question, is this meal as meaningful as it was 20 months ago?



We are invited to sit next to each other, remove our masks and celebrate together. It is more meaningful now that we are invited to share with the greatest meal with people sitting around us. Through all challenges in the past months, the Lord has not forgotten us. By sharing the meal together, He is with us and in us.

The memories of the past years now blend in with the changes in our lives. But nothing has really changed. Open the door, walk in, feel welcome, rejoice in being the invited ones.

In Advent Week 2, we wrote acrostic poems, the same style as Psalm 34; others are written in their original Hebrew:

*Peace
Especially
As
Calm
Emerges*

*Waiting for
Another
Time when
Community can enter
Homes
In
No fear of
Getting and giving sickness*

*Looking toward the light
It's Advent – that's what we do
Glad to have the promise of his coming
Harmony, peace and love surround us
Today, tomorrow and always*

*Northern star light
Illuminates
Guides
He is
The Chosen One*

*Powerful
Read
Aloud
Yearnings
Everyone's
Respectful*

*Christ
Heaven sent
Immortal
Lord of All
Divine*

*Awake the time is coming
Delighting in God's gift
Victorious birth to freedom
Eternal life in a babe
Nativity of our Lord
The time is coming to rejoice!*

*Dainty bird
Overseas it flew
View an olive branch
Endlessly rejoice*

*Loving
Our
Random
Departures*

*Jesus was born on Christmas Day
Of the Virgin Mary to save us from our sins
You and I and all who believe will join him in heaven at
the end of our days*

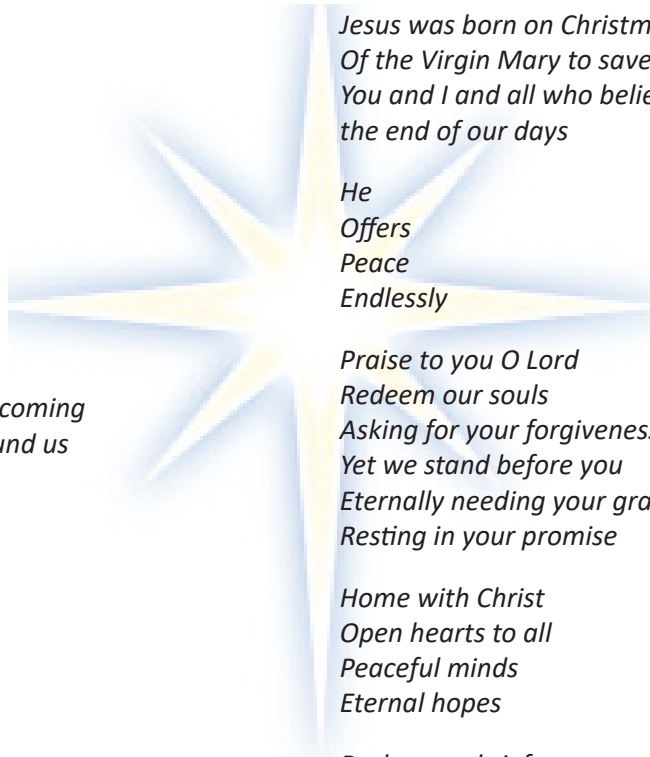
*He
Offers
Peace
Endlessly*

*Praise to you O Lord
Redeem our souls
Asking for your forgiveness
Yet we stand before you
Eternally needing your grace
Resting in your promise*

*Home with Christ
Open hearts to all
Peaceful minds
Eternal hopes*

*Psalms are brief
Sermons with important
Lessons for those who are
Able to listen to teachings and
Messages from those wiser than we*

*Praise
Everlasting
Almighty
Child
End and Beginning*



Grace Gallery



I want to thank everyone for their participation in the Gallery. I would like to try something different next year. Instead of having an art setup date, people can remove and set up art at their own pace. Try to keep the amount to three pieces of art so other people can participate. Let's give this a try and see how it works. If we are running low on labels, let Crissy know.

Nina



Gloria Sutton painted some summertime fun.

Have a Chuckle

submitted by Linda Gaenicke

A donkey, dog, and cat died and went to heaven. God asked each one if he had served God in any way.

The donkey replied that he helped other donkeys and was a good donkey.

The dog said that he served man and other dogs and was a very good dog.

The cat looked at God and said, "pardon me, but you are sitting on my chair."



Most Christians have adopted the custom of putting up a Christmas tree. Have you thought how your Christmas tree can be a faith expression?

In the 7th century a monk from Devonshire went to Germany to teach the Word of God. Legend says he used the triangular shape of the fir tree to describe the Trinity: God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. By the 12th century the tree was used at Christmas in Central Europe, as a symbol of Christianity.

The first documented decorated tree was in Latvia, in 1510. In the 16th century, Martin Luther is said to have decorated a Christmas tree with candles, to show his children how the stars twinkled through the dark night.

The Christmas tree is a place for creativity; it fuels nostalgia and speaks to what is important to us. Decorations highlight our country, families, creativity and achievements. Yet Christmas gives witness to faith. How do our Christmas trees glorify God and bear witness to our faith today?

This message is excerpted from the 2009 Women of the ELCA resource "The Colors of Christmas," written by Bonnie B. Belasic



At Christmas we give. We give what we can to help make others' Christmases brighter.

That "what we can" is important. We can feel trapped between expectations, whether our own or others', and the hard reality that there are limits to our time, money and energy. We mere human beings have only so much to give—but then again, we have so much to give!

We can freely, lovingly, graciously give abundant gifts of service and presence and delight and support. And that kind of giving feels really good, doesn't it? And why is that?

We are created in the image of God, who freely creates, lovingly redeems, and graciously sanctifies. Giving according to that divine model—within our human limits—is our true joy.

I remember as I child that after Christmas I would ask my friends: "Did you get everything you wanted for Christmas?" And now I ask, "Did you give everything you wanted for Christmas?"

This message is excerpted from "Did you Give Everything you Wanted for Christmas?" by Audrey Novak Riley from the December 29, 2019, blog of the Women of the ELCA.

What About Stewardship?

by Mark Dembro



Just as the last two years, 2020 and 2021, have been difficult for many people individually and for many families, these years have been difficult financially for our Congregation. Even

when we couldn't worship in person in our Sanctuary, our bills still had to be paid. And while our bills still had to be paid, our giving dropped a lot.

We are now in a serious financial condition.

As we enter 2022, our Congregation will soon consider an annual budget that doesn't have any fat to trim. There are no extras to cut. Our only path to good financial health requires us to increase our giving to our congregation.

Stewardship has both spiritual and practical aspects.

Spiritual: We are blessed to be a blessing, and are called to use God's gifts to us in generous and wise ways.

Practical: Our Congregation needs the money. As our Minister of Stewardship, I have been emphasizing the practical aspect of stewardship.

Spiritually, I believe we all hear God's call to us.

Practically, I believe we can all use help with the facts and figures of understanding how much money it costs to run our Congregation.

Our Giving fell from 2019 to 2020 and fell further from 2020 to 2021. In these years, our budgeted expenses went up. Where our giving goes from here is entirely up to us.

To help keep us all informed about our financial needs and situation, our Council will continue our weekly talks on Stewardship by Council members at Sunday services. Our Council will host small-group presentations with details about the 2022 budget and stewardship needs during January 2022. As our Minister of Stewardship, I will write monthly Stewardship Updates for our service bulletins. Through it all, I'll continue to emphasize the financial aspect.

Stewardship questions? Ask me anytime.

Yours,

Mark Dembro

A Few Things I Have Learned

by Mary Ronen

I was sitting at my computer, staring at an empty page, and wondering what I was going to write for this issue of the *Voice of Grace*. Coming up blank, I started looking around the internet for some ideas. I came across several articles about Christmas, Epiphany and the three wise men.

One thing I didn't know was that Epiphany has been celebrated since the end of the second century, even before the Christmas holiday was established, and is known as Twelfth Night, Twelfth Day, or the Feast of Epiphany.

I'd heard of the three wise men, but didn't know that there weren't actually three of them that we know of. Or that they were necessarily wise. We are told that the Magi came to see this new King of the Jews, bringing expensive gifts: gold (fit for a king); frankincense (used to worship at a temple); and myrrh (used for embalming.)

The word "Magi" refers to a Persian religious caste, but early on the term was used for astrologers, seers, and fortunetellers.

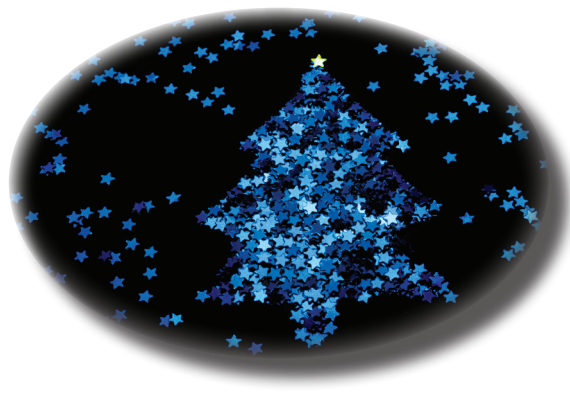
Not being Jewish, and wealthy at that, the wise men, or magi, represent that Jesus came to save all people everywhere no matter their social or economic standing.

They were probably at the top of Persian or Babylonian society, and were likely familiar with Jewish writings. As astrologers, they must have wondered about the star in those writings.

As do I—wonder about the star. I was not able to find anything conclusive about the star. It could have been a nova. Or an "especially vibrant planetary conjunction easily visible in the evening sky." One source commented, "God can use natural law to accomplish His will...The Bible records a number of occasions where God has acted in a seemingly unusual way to accomplish an extraordinary purpose." Do you have an explanation?

Christmas is a miracle.

Mary



Update on our Ugandan Students

by Sharon Dembro

Kenneth says that our students are well and that the surge in COVID cases during the summer has ended. Many died. Now, he says, people are anxious to receive the vaccines and cases have fallen, though the effects of Omicron are still to be felt. Primary and Secondary students will return to mixed in-person/on-line learning in January. Post secondary students went back in early November.

Kenneth has been a real hero during this time, personally delivering and picking up student assignments for those unable to access them via computer. He has also stayed close to their personal situations, finding new solutions for several whose extended families could no longer support them.

This year, at Kenneth's suggestion, we gave each of our 28 children a pair of shoes at \$28 (the only ones they will have until next Christmas) and an Oxford Basic English Dictionary at \$12. Kenneth gathered the children on December 19 to distribute their gifts. See smiling photos!

Kenneth was proud to announce that our young scholar Dagalous Luggya had the best scores in his district on the O level national level exams, with distinction in every subject : English, history, geography, Luganda, math, physics, chemistry, biology and commerce. He very much wants to become a doctor and will study math, chemistry and biology when he begins his two years of A level classes in January. Daniel Lugemwa and Kevin Nambalirwa also had 1st level passes.

Thank you so much for supporting these children. Please keep them in your prayers as they keep us in theirs.



Dagalous, Aggrey and Joas.



Brian, Kevin, Abraham, Rosette and Diana.

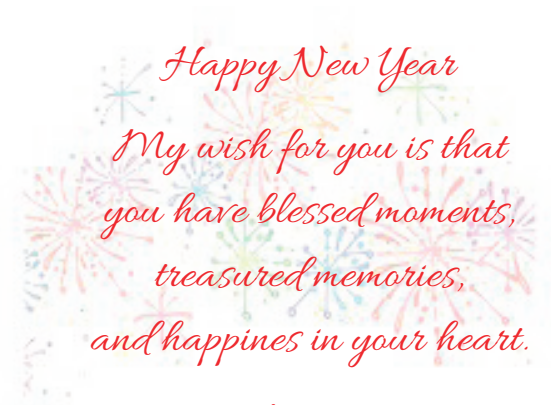


Abraham and Rosette.



Cissy and Josephine.

Photos taken by Kenneth Kasule
of the children with their gifts.



Mary



Let's fill this up.

Mark Your Calendar

Adult forum, Sundays, 9:15 a.m.
Worship, Sundays, 10:30 a.m.
Lectionary Study, Wednesdays, 10:30 a.m.
Men's Bible Breakfast, Fridays, 8 a.m., at The Roadhouse
ViadeCristo Reunion, 2nd & 4th Friday evenings, 5:30 p.m.
Council, 2nd Tuesdays, 5:15 p.m.

Semiannual Congregational meeting, January 30, 11:45 a.m.

Happy Birthday!

January

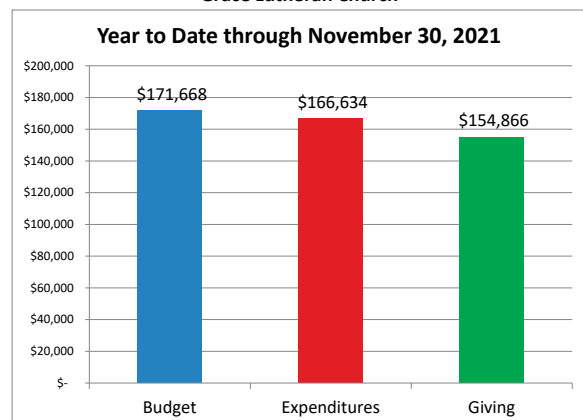
Lynn Bender	January 1
Chuck Thompson	January 15
Sandy Wefel	January 21
Tom Daly	January 24
Neil Walden	January 26
Roberta Bymers	January 27
Peter Cannon	January 29

February

Alex Brown	February 1
S. Michael Shadow	February 1
Dee Dee Norman	February 3
Carol Kong	February 5
Laura Anderson	February 8
Cameron Janssen	February 8
Dora Robinson	February 11
Nils Dobszinsky	February 24
Lois Sherwood	February 24

Grace Financials

Grace Lutheran Church



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President: Mary Ronen
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Ministers:
Resources (Treasurer): Dennis Struecker
Fellowship: Jim Norman
Facilities: Jim Little
Worship/Music: Nina Daly
Stewardship: Mark Dembro
Social Concerns: Don Fristoe

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Editor Voice of Grace: Mary Ronen
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