



January 5, 2018

Greetings friends,

Whew! Weren't the holidays fun again this year? As I began taking down decorations and putting them away, I was struck as I am each year at this time, with a little melancholy. It is so cold outside and my holiday twinkle lights and special candles and such always do a great job of hiding the cold, hard facts of winter from me in December.

My post-Christmas decorating has gone from putting out all my snowmen – I once had dozens – to finding every bit of greenery I have to brighten up our home. I have some light-up faux trees that I always bring out in January because I can't quite go "cold turkey" on twinkling lights after the holidays. The nights are long and cold and dark and so I'm always looking to add a bit of brightness to our wintertime home.

As always, God has a plan to help us through the darkness of wintertime. It is called Epiphany, when we celebrate that God came to live among us through his son, Jesus. We celebrate the arrival of the three kings, the magi, the scholars who visited the baby Jesus and offered special gifts. It is also when we remember Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist. Epiphany is a season of enlightenment in our church year and it is perfectly placed as a beacon of hope for God's faithful living in a world that can be cold and bitter.

This Week at Grace – This Sunday we celebrate Epiphany. Pastor Fred's message, *Going Home a Different Way*, is inspired by Matthew 2:1-12. The choir will be back in service with their piece, *Just a Little Talk with Jesus*, and we will celebrate Communion. Cathy Hermanson is our liturgist this week with Steph and Tori Fournier and Kevin and Candi Holm serving double duty as greeters and ushers. As always, worship begins at 9:15. Following our morning worship service this week, we will be taking down all of our Christmas finery – please plan to stay and lend a helping hand. Sunday school classes resume this Sunday. Please join us!

ADULT STUDY

In John 20:51 we read, "These things are written so that you will believe that Jesus is the Christ, God's Son, and that believing, you will have life in his name."

You are invited to join us during the Sunday school hour beginning in January as we explore the major themes of the Gospel of John. We will be using the Adam Hamilton study "John: The Gospel of Light and Life." Each chapter includes a short video by Rev. Hamilton as an introduction.

Please, stop in the choir room on January 7th to pick up a book. We won't begin our discussions until Sunday the 14th. We hope everyone will help with the Christmas decoration take down this Sunday. On the 14th, stop by Fellowship Hall for coffee and a snack, then join the group for study, insight and greater understanding of this important Gospel. If you have questions, contact Rhonda Hampton. All adults are welcome.

Thank you to Hubert and Raejean Bicklehaupt for volunteering to help with pew maintenance in 2018 – it sure would be nice to have a few more people to help with this twice monthly chore! Let us know in the office if you'd like to be a part of this helpful ministry chore.

Candi Holm will be in the sanctuary on Wednesday, January 17, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. to audit the books for Grace Church. If you are the treasurer of an organization with Grace, please bring your books that night. If you are unable to please make other arrangements with Candi by email at candiholm21@gmail.com

Please plan to stick around after worship on Sunday, January 7th. We'll need lots of volunteers to help take down our decorations and the Christmas tree. Remember, many hands make light work for all! Thanks and we hope to see you and your two willing hands there!

Who wants to help organize a family fun night in January? As we have in the past, we could bring board/card games from home and enjoy a simple meal and some delightful time in fellowship sharing a meal and playing games. Last year we tried a soup supper with great success. We could do that again or try a taco bar or a baked potato bar or.... We could meet later in the afternoon on a Sunday or right after Sunday school or...We are limited only by our own imaginations and willingness to participate. Contact the church office if you or a group of friends would be willing to make this happen.

Our new 2018 committees have begun to meet. Welcome to all those who are new to their committees and welcome back to those continuing for another year in their service. Again, thank you to all who served us so well in 2017. Great things will continue to happen at Grace if we all pull together in fellowship and love! Happy New Year!

As you pray this week, please remember these friends and hold each up in special prayer:
Tim (Becky Barclay's brother); Natalie Tryon; Denny Michel; Julie Jacobson; Sara Dappen; Norman Patti; Sharon Matson; Pam Hillis; Lois Johnson; Cooper Leeman, Taylors in Africa

News You Can Use

Sunday, January 7

9:15 AM Worship
10:15 AM Take down Christmas decorations
10:30 AM Sunday school

Monday, January 8

5:30 PM SPRC
7:00 PM Worship

Wednesday, January 10

1:30 PM UMW
7:00 PM Choir
8:00 PM Bells

Thursday, January 11

6:15 PM – SPRC, CDT, Council, Finance, Trustees meet with DS Gillespie

Sunday, January 14

8:00 AM Trustees
9:15 AM Worship – Bells play
10:15 AM Coffee Fellowship
10:30 AM Sunday school & Confirmation

**Faithfully,
Cathy**