



December 19, 2018

Greetings friends,

What a delight last Sunday was from beginning to end! The choir was so pleased to feature 3 of our talented folk as soloists – Tanner Blue, Claudia Pauk on flute and Denise Carlson during our worship service. And Pastor Jonathan, as always, delivered a great, thought-provoking message. Then, our Sunday Brunch was a big hit this month – thank you to Steph & Tori Fournier for filling in for Sharla! And finally, our Sunday school kids did a wonderful job with their old-fashioned Christmas program! We are blessed with such talented, hard-working children and youth at Grace. It is impressive to see them taking responsibility and doing their best. Erma and I were tickled with the whole thing. And we also want to recognize and thank our adult “volunteers” who were such good sports about participating too; thank you Pastor Jonathan, Brian McNamara, Craig Jensen, George Janvrin, Jody & Brent Larson, Gloria Sampson and Kate Feil. Thanks also to our Sunday school teachers Beckey Witthuhn, Christine Semler-Blue, Andrea Jensen and Rhonda Hampton.

The celebration continues with worship this Sunday and our Candle Light Christmas Eve service on Monday at 5 pm. May our gatherings of family and friends be full of the music of laughter, the thankfulness of hearts, and of peace as we continue our celebration of the birth of our Savior .

**This Week at Grace** – Pastor Jonathan’s message this week, “Tis the Season for; Love” is inspired by two passages, Micah 5:2-5a and Luke 1:39-45. We’re lighting the first four candles on the Advent Wreath with Adam, Val, Owen, Camille and Eli doing the honors. *Greeters this week are LeRoy & Priscilla Johnson. Those serving as ushers include Dale & Lynn Henricks and Mike & Patsy Jensen. Claudia Pauk is our liturgist.* Worship begins at 9:15 with coffee and fellowship immediately after the worship service. Please join us!

**Our Christmas Eve Candle Light service is set for 5:00pm on Monday evening.**

**Thank you to everyone who has turned in their pledge card!** If you haven’t yet turned in your purple pledge card for 2019, please do so at your earliest convenience. Extra cards can be found on the usher’s table in the narthex. You may place it in the offering plate or drop it by the office, or mail it in. We look forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you!

**St. Petri Lutheran Church has invited the community to a brief Blue Christmas/Longest Night service this Friday, December 21, at 7 pm.** Everyone is invited to attend, but the service is designed for those who grieve or find the Advent/Christmas season a time of sorrow or pain. Participants can slow down, be still, and know that God is God. These services can be a time of refuge. Pastor Jonathan will be attending.

**The Story City EDC is hosting a Trivia Night** on January 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm (doors open at 6:00) at the Story City Community Center. We’d like to get a team or two together to represent Grace Church. Team size is 8 players and tables are limited, so we’ll want to get registered soon. Let Jonathan know if you’d like to participate – there is a table fee of \$12.50 per person.

***Living Faithfully: The United Methodist Church and Human Sexuality*** is a little book that, in just four short chapters—leads us through a discussion of the issues at the core of our church’s current struggle. What is the conflict about? What do people on either “side” have to say? In February a special general conference will receive—and perhaps act on—a report from *The Commission on A Way Forward*. This commission was tasked with finding a way for the United Methodist Church to continue its ministry while our people remained in connection with one another. I feel it is my

responsibility to lead the congregation into some kind of understanding of the issues involved. We will be discussing this book in the adult Sunday school class beginning January 13. I would also like to make another time available: perhaps Sunday evenings, Tuesday evenings, or Wednesday before choir practice. Please indicate your preference on the attendance pad. The office is purchasing a number of books to get us started.

Many of us may not know what this is all about. Some of us may already have strong opinions (and this discussion is not meant to change anyone's mind). Quite a few of us have been affected either within our families or extended circle of friends. Let's take some time to talk. –Jonathan

Jonathan will cover the material three times each week beginning January 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Sunday mornings during the Sunday school hour (10:30-11:30)**

**Wednesday afternoons from 5:30-6:30**

**Thursday evenings at 7:00-8:00**

It is a 4 to 5 week class. The Wednesday and Thursday sessions will meet in the Chapel. Participants may come to whichever session that suits their schedule each week. Additional Living Faithfully books have been ordered and will be available next week. A \$10 gift would be appreciated, but is not required.

**As you pray this week, please remember these friends and hold each up in special prayer:**

The family of Sally Donald; family and friends of Carl Hermanson; Renee Menz (Dale & Lynn Henricks daughter); Sara Dappen; Velda Frette; George Sellers; Pat Skowronski; Sally Donald (Judy A's sister); Joan Cooney; Lois Johnson; Garry Gerjets; Clarence (friend of George Sellers); Jackie Royer (Sharla's friend); Cooper Leeman; Taylor family in Africa

## News You Can Use

### Friday, December 21

7:00 PM Longest Night/Blue Christmas at St. Petri

### Sunday, December 23 – Fourth Sunday of Advent

9:15 AM Worship

10:15 AM Coffee Fellowship

### Monday, December 24 – Christmas Eve

5:00 PM Candle Light Worship

6:00 PM Potluck supper at the Parsonage

### Tuesday, December 25

WISHING YOU A BLESSED CHRISTMAS!

### Wednesday, December 26

January newsletters folded and sent

### Thursday, December 27 and Friday, December 28

OFFICE CLOSED

### Sunday, December 30

9:15 AM Worship

10:15 AM Coffee Fellowship

Please "like" our Facebook page, [@storycitygrace](#) and receive regular updates on "what's happening" at Grace Church! Our website, [www.grace-umc.com](http://www.grace-umc.com) is full of information and pictures about the life and activities of our Grace Church family. Please check it out!

**Faithfully,  
Cathy**