



December 24, 2018

Greetings friends,

Ahhh, Christmas with friends and family – what a delightful combination! We've delighted in several Christmas parties with friends over the last few weeks. We've shared good food, conversation and games and are thankful for dear friends to celebrate alongside. Family-wise, our holiday has been all about when our newest miracle, grandbaby #2, will make his/her debut. We've planned and re-planned several times and hope to meet on Friday with little "sweet pea" present and available for cuddling. For her part, Miss Cora has been thoroughly

prepared and awaits her new sibling with happy anticipation. She isn't aware enough to realize more Christmas is coming as well. Still, I'm confident she will rise to the challenge and will be very accommodating when it is time to open more "surprises"! Mark and I are looking forward to hosting the annual Clayberg Christmas a week into January! With the new baby and some other exciting things going on, we've delayed that much-anticipated pleasure to the 12th day of Christmas! Yes, we're squeezing every last drop of joy out of the holidays this year.

For today, we're looking forward to the Candlelight service and the opportunity to welcome, once again, the Christ-child and all he represents into our lives. I'm wishing one and all peace as we celebrate the blessings of Christmas.

This Week at Grace – Pastor Jonathan's message for our 5:00 Candlelight service this evening is "Tis the Time for: A Baby" and is inspired by Luke 2:1-20.

On Sunday, December 30, Pastor is using John 1:1-14 as inspiration for his message - "Tis the Season for: Beginning". *Greeters on Sunday are Vivian Whitmore and Lorijo Lounsberry. Those serving as ushers include Kevin & Candi Holm, Cheryl Semler and Gini Michel. Gloria Sampson is our liturgist.* Worship begins at 9:15 with coffee and fellowship immediately after the worship service. Please join us!

NOTE: Financial end-of the year gifts for 2018 must be dated (if in check form) by Dec. 31, 2018 and be received in the church office on or before January 4th. Thank you!

ON Sunday, Jan. 6th, we will be taking down all of our Christmas decorations at the church following the worship service. Please plan to stick around to lend a hand!

The Story City EDC is hosting a Trivia Night on January 18th 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. This is a themed event with participants encourage to come dressed as a favorite TV or movie character. Teams can coordinate and even decorate the table to fit their group theme. 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 13th.

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 will be available on the north table in the narthex hallway. A \$10 gift would be appreciated, but is not required.

LOST AND FOUND - We have a handsome, gray-striped cardigan sweater in the office. It mysteriously showed up in the backseat of my car while we were at church on December 16th. Please swing by the office and pick it up if it belongs to you!

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

Monday, December 24

5:00 PM Candlelight Worship Service

Tuesday, December 25

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Sunday, December 30

9:15 AM Worship

10:15 AM Coffee Fellowship

Monday, December 31 – New Year's Eve

Please celebrate responsibly!

Tuesday, January 1

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Wednesday, January 2

7:00 PM Choir

8:00 PM Bells

Friday, January 4

OFFICE CLOSED

Sunday, January 6

9:15 AM Worship

10:15 AM Take down decoration

10:30 AM Sunday school

Please "like" our Facebook page, [@storycitygrace](#) and receive regular updates on "what's happening" at Grace Church! Our website, 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**