



November 28, 2018

Greetings friends,

This past week has been so interesting. With the early Thanksgiving on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, it seems like many have been quick to get all of their holiday finery up in their homes. The tree at the center of town (another beauty) has been officially lit and every street boasts several homes with festively lit exteriors. Last Sunday we had a wonderful turn-out as we decorated the church for Christmas. And a high percentage of my recent conversations have included progress reports on decorating, Christmas shopping and holiday baking. It seems everyone is ready for the cheer and the good-will the Advent/Christmas season brings.

It could very likely be more like this than I realize every year, but I'm usually so caught up in the frenzy that I don't notice it. For years we've hosted several Christmas parties in our home – sometimes as early as the Tuesday following Thanksgiving. These early parties often cause a lot of mad rushing around trying to get everything out and in place. But, this year, we don't have that pressure and I think I may just be relishing the leisurely pace I can adopt this year.

With a new grandbaby due at the end of the month (and the uncertainty of just when that blessed debut might happen) one would think I'd be anxious to make the holiday decorating transformation early. Not that November 28<sup>th</sup> is late for heaven's sake. Some folks don't put up their tree until the week of Christmas or (gasp) Christmas Eve. Of course, they probably have a real tree and there are practical/safety reasons for a later set-up.

Lest you think I'm harboring some Scrooge-like sentiments, I'm playing Christmas music, I've ordered our Christmas cards and I am very nearly done with Christmas gift shopping. I do make several things myself and am a shopper who picks things up as I see them for a few months in advance of Black Friday. I may miss out on a deal or two, but there is something to be said for spreading the joy of discovery (and the bills) out over a few months.

I really do like our Christmas décor and I am looking forward to having our tree lit for quiet evenings at home. My usual end of the month busyness has nearly concluded. Perhaps I'll aim for December 1<sup>st</sup> as the date to 'git 'r dun'. Of course, there is nothing wrong with decorating on the 2<sup>nd</sup> or... It appears that we may have here is just a case of procrastination. Hmmm

**This Week at Grace** – Pastor Jonathan's message this week, "Is the Season for; Blessings" is inspired by Luke 21:25-36. We're lighting the first candle on the Advent Wreath with Gloria Sampson and Lorijo Lounsberry doing the honors. The choir returns this week and will sing "Prepare the Way" with Tanner Blue as soloist. *Greeters this week are Shirley Frandson and Chuck & Ruby Matheason. Those serving as ushers include David & Mary Loupee and Rod & Sue Bohner. Kurt Carlson is our liturgist.* Worship begins at 9:15 with Coffee Fellowship time following at 10:15. Pastor Jonathan is inviting everyone to visit the parsonage after enjoying a snack in Fellowship Hall. He's settled in, has decorated for Christmas and thought you might like to take a peek. Sunday school meets at 10:30 - please join us!

**Pledge Cards for 2019** – If you haven't yet turned in your Pledge Card, don't despair! We will be happy to receive them for the next few weeks. Thank you for being generous in your giving plan for 2019.

**A special offering will be asked on December 9<sup>th</sup>** for those who would like to directly support Bethany Life residents during the holidays. Every year Bethany Life provides a Christmas gift for each resident on Christmas morning. This year, they are asking for help to make it happen. Look for a designated basket to give to this concern on December 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>** you're invited to stop in at the parsonage to have a look around now that Jonathan is settled in. Enjoy your coffee and snack in Fellowship Hall and then pop over for a "look-see" next door!

**The Story City Kiwanis have place a decorated box in the narthex** and invite you to help fill it with hats, scarves, mittens and gloves for Roland-Story Elementary and Middle School children in need. The box will be here until December 6 if you'd care to contribute.

***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

**The Story City Senior Citizens, Inc & Central Iowa RSVP are celebrating 45 years of serving Story City!** You're invited to an **Anniversary Open House on Thursday, December 6th from 4-6pm at the Story City Community Center** at 503 Elm Ave. They will have a soup & appetizer assortment, beverages and CAKE!

**The Bethany Life Volunteers** are holding their annual **bake sale and craft sale at the Households of Bethany on Sunday, December 9, 2018**. Find us in the lobby area of 212 Lafayette St. in Story City, Iowa between 10 AM and 1 PM. We will have Christmas Crafts and Baked Goods, including POTATO CAKES! Come support the Bethany Life Volunteers by stopping in to our sale on December 9<sup>th</sup>. You will be glad you did – and so will we!

**Someone inadvertently printed June birthdays** rather than the December list in the Visitor this week. Here are the friends who will be celebrating the anniversary of their birth in December.

#### **December Birthdays**

Melissa Brown	12-6
Brent Larson	12-7
Rayneil Wolf	12-8
Vicki Kepley	12-9
Ron Cook	12-9
Linda Larson	12-10
Hubert Bickelhaupt	12-10
Camille Hubert	12-16
Alyce Wirth	12-17
Kurt Carlson	12-20
Jolene Wolf	12-24
Dan Webster	12-26
Joan Barrett	12-27
Dale Henricks	12-28
Erica Watts	12-28
Tony Blue	12-30

**Angel Tree gifts** should be wrapped, tagged with the slip you picked up, and delivered to Immanuel Church by Monday morning, December 10<sup>th</sup>.

**St. Petri Lutheran Church has invited the community to a brief Blue Christmas/Longest Night** service on **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.

**As you pray this week, please remember these friends and hold each up in special prayer:**  
Renee (Dale & Lynn Henricks daughter); Sara Dappen; Velda Frette; 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**

### **Sunday, December 2 – First Sunday of Advent**

9:15 AM Worship – Communion, Choir

10:15 AM Coffee Fellowship – Parsonage Open House – 10:30-noon

10:30 AM Sunday school & program rehearsal

### **Monday, December 3**

5:30 PM Communications

6:30 PM Education

### **Wednesday, December 5**

5:00 PM Kids' Bells

5:30 PM RS Boys BB Team Meal in Fellowship Hall

7:00 PM Choir

8:00 PM Bells

### **Thursday, December 6**

Evening Scrapbooking group in Fellowship Hall

### **Saturday, December 8**

2:00-4:00 PM Celebration of Life (Julie Jacobson)

### **Sunday, December 9 – Second Sunday of Advent**

9:15 AM Worship – Bells & Chancel Choirs

10:15 AM Coffee Fellowship

10:30 AM Sunday school & program rehearsal

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**