

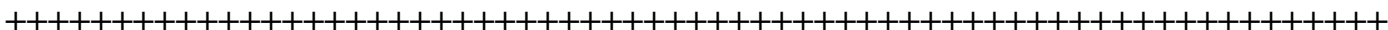
THE CARILLON



Grace Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



The New Church Year Begins With Advent!!

Advent 1 - November 26

Advent 2 - December 23

Advent 3 - December 10

Advent 4 - December 17

First Sunday of Christmas – December 24

Second Sunday of Christmas – December 31

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Sunday, December 24 – Christmas Eve – First Sunday of Christmas

(There will be no morning Worship)

5:00 PM at Hope in Mineral Point

7:00 PM at Grace in Darlington

Plan now to keep worship the center of Christmas. Reach out and invite your friends and extended family to join you for worship with time together before or after!

Sunday, December 31 – Second Sunday of Christmas

8:30 AM at Grace in Darlington

10:30 AM at Hope in Mineral Point

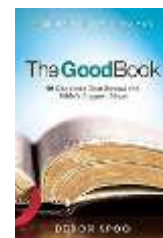
We look forward to a Christmas Hymn-Sing & Stories, as well as a special New Year's Blessing of individual families, couples, and households.

WELCOME TO ADVENT!

This year's Advent Devotional **O Come Emmanuel** is now available in the narthex. You may notice that the devotional begins Advent on December 3 this year, and yet our churches claimed **November 26** as the **first Sunday of Advent**. When Christmas Eve lands on Sunday, the morning is officially considered the 4th Sunday of Advent. We made the move to start Advent early this year so we could celebrate all four weeks.

THE GOOD BOOK – Bible study and Discussion

Everyone is invited! Please note you can join in/come when you can as each session is a new topic. Easy to participate if read in advance or not! We have a few books available for \$12.00. The discussion is held most Mondays at 11:00 AM.



December 4 – Grace Fellowship Hall: Chapter 11 “Making Sense of Your Suffering (lunch provided)

December 11 – Pointer Café: Chapter 13 “Guilty but at Peace”

December 18 – Grace Fellowship Hall: Chapter 14 “God is closer Than You Think”

January 8 – Grace Fellowship Hall: Chapter 15 “Words of Wisdom”

Monthly Small Group Study: December 6 - 6:00-8:00 PM in December in Grace Fellowship Hall: Chapters 11-15 “God is Big”

POINSETTIAS



It's time to think about ordering poinsettias for Christmas! Order forms are available in the narthex. The cost is \$12.00 per plant this year. The last day to order will be Sunday, December 10. Please make checks payable to **Grace Lutheran Church.** If you wish to bring other flowers or plants to help decorate the sanctuary they will be more than welcome. You may also stop out at Nature's Gifts and order directly. If you have questions, contact the church office at 776-4462 or darlingluthrans@gmail.com.

WORDS OF GRATITUDE

A big thank you to:

- to Diane Bredeson, Tana Risseeuw, Pat Roelli, and Sheila Carrington for donating a variety of cards to be used and sent out for special occasions throughout the year to our members and our homebound people.
- Dick Anderson for setting up our outdoor nativity scene
- all those who helped decorate for the season of Advent
- Care Team for preparing and sending Thanksgiving cards to the homebound and others
- all who helped take down/clean up the harvest decorations
- those who provided refreshments for fellowship during the month of November
- Mary Roelli and Linda Considine – newly serving on the Council



(Thinking forward - if you know a person(s) in our congregation to be thanked, please let the church office know. Thank you)

Thank yous Received

“Thank you for letting the Lafayette County Home and Community Education (HCE) use your facility for our Fall Gathering meeting. We appreciate the use of your wonderful building thank you!” ---Lafayette County HCE

“Thank you for your kindness and generosity! Happy Holidays from everyone at Family Advocates”



WORSHIP ASSISTANTS for DECEMBER

	December 3	December 10	December 17	December 24	December 31
Altar Care	Pat R Mary R	Linda C Diane B	Jalaine R Sheila C	Marilyn J	Pat R Mary R
Reader	Don B	Marilyn J	Marv R	Paul R	Kris F
Greeters *	Don & Laura Barnard	Marilyn J	Marv & Sandy Reis	Paul & Pat Roelli	Steve & Kris Fleming
Ushers **	Don L. Gary B	Don L Serenedy O	Don L. McKenna R.	Steve F	Paul R
Acolytes	Marta R Serenedy O	McKenna R	Brax W		Brynn W
Communion	Mary R	Linda C	Jalaine R	Marilyn J	Mary R
Bread	Laura B	-----	Marilyn J		Mary R
Counters	December 10-14 _____ December 25-31 _____				

**Please arrive 20 minutes early. **Please arrive 25 minutes early.*

If you are unable to fulfill your role on a given weekend, please contact another person/family on the Worship Leader Schedule and swap or have someone cover for you.

See the bulletin board in the narthex for a more extensive schedule.

Please indicate changes ahead of time on that master schedule, **or** if need be, contact the office with changes. (Office: 608.776.4462; darlinglutherans@gmail.com).

FELLOWSHIP SCHEDULE

Fellowship - Refreshments and conversation following worship. Directions are posted inside the cabinet in the upstairs fellowship area. If you have questions, please call Vicki Johnston (776-4572) or Pat Roelli (482-0572).



DECEMBER

- 3 - Jalaine Ruegsegger/Sheila Carrington
- 10 - Tiffany Meyers/Sheila Andrews/
Alana Black
- 17 - Vicki Johnston/Pat Roelli
- 24 - Christmas Eve
- 31 - Marilyn Johns/Wendy Johns

JANUARY

- 7- Mary Ann Roelli/Heather Blosch
- 14 -Diane Bredeson/Carol Barnard
- 21 -Tina Riechers/Jan Riechers
- 28 -Kris Fleming/Kate Chambers

Grace Lutheran Church Council



President: Jody White
Vice President Chuck Barnard
Secretary: Kris Fleming
Mary Ann Roelli

Financial Secretary: Laura Barnard
Treasurer: Tina Riechers
Don Barnard
Linda Considine

Things your Council is working on now:

We are beginning to prepare for the annual meeting and follow thru in the learnings regarding the Congregational Vitality Survey results.

THE CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY SURVEY: *Sharing & Reflecting*

During the month of June, the Council asked our congregation members to complete a survey especially designed by our partners at the Churchwide Organization of the ELCA and managed by our South Central Synod colleagues. The survey helped us learn more about our strengths and opportunities for growth as we seek to discern together where God is leading us. The results were gathered into a report which the Council took time to read, interpret, reflect upon, and discuss with the help of our synod's Director of Evangelical Mission (DEM), Rev. Walter Baires. The survey has been used to help us begin developing deeper questions and discern where God may be leading us together.

The survey included 36 multiple-choice questions. **Twenty-eight surveys were collected.** When compiled, we were able to look at each question in terms how we see ourselves, as well as where each aspect of our life together in mission fell on the continuum of "High," "Medium," "Low," and "At Risk." The Council met twice with Rev. Baires and were guided in a process to discern **three primary concerns** and **three perceived strengths** of our congregation, as well as **important things for us to keep in mind** and **our initial focus as we move forward.** In a nutshell, this is what we have determined together:

What are the *primary concerns* of the congregation?

- 1. Small numbers of active, engaged members**
 - aging membership
 - lack of newcomers/new members
 - disengagement of some members & younger generations
- 2. Finances**
 - less giving units
 - low giving
 - concerns with costs and ability to meet financial obligations
- 3. Relationships – Disconnect**
 - with youth
 - with absent or peripheral members
 - with our neighborhood
 - with our community

What are the *perceived strengths* of the congregation?

- 1. Quality of worship services, music, preaching**
- 2. The core relationships are strong.**

Continued on next page

Congregational Vitality Survey continued

3. Good upkeep of the facility

- asset for relationship connections – with each other, neighborhood, community
- asset for service and others' needs
- mortgage paid off/minimal debt

Important Things for Us Keep in Mind

- God is with people all the time. Perhaps some people are continuing to practice the faith outside the church.
- God is engaged with the world in the world. Where is God among us? In our neighborhood? In our community? What is God doing?
- It is **not helpful** is automatically jumping to trying to “fix” the situation with more activities, programs, and resurrecting successes in our past.
- What **is helpful** is praying together, reflecting upon God’s word for understanding and direction, getting curious by asking questions, relationship-building, and seeking deeper understanding of each other, those who are no longer participating and contributing to the mission, our neighbors, and our community.

Our Initial Focus as We Go Forward --

1. Share the survey results with the congregation by various means --
 - a. Pastor’s newsletter article
 - b. Council highlights in newsletter
 - c. A time of shorter sermons and abbreviating parts of worship in order to provide time for key discernment questions and conversation together– following the sermon, during fellowship, and other gatherings.
 - d. Letter to the congregation as a follow-up with an invitation to conversation (perhaps in conjunction with our annual meeting?)
2. Ask God’s people to be alert to the Holy Spirit providing opportunities to invite others to worship, activities. Often these will be through current relationships.
3. Find excuses to celebrate and bring people together (opportunities for conversation, listening, and relationship-building).
4. Form a “listening group” to design and put into action holy experiments and listening opportunities to increase understanding and awareness for mission.
5. How to act on opportunities to encourage, recognize, and pray for others in a timely fashion. Celebrate youth.

We invite and encourage you to participate in this ongoing process of seeking the Spirit’s guidance and direction for this church. Keep yourself informed on the process and look for ways to be engaged and support God’s mission for us here. Continued prayer is a good place to start!

-- Pr. Kate and the Grace Council

SECOND-MILE OFFERINGS (formerly Noisy Offering)

Following the collection of our regular offering on Sundays, a second-mile offering is collected each week for those in need.

August-October: Our local Salvation Army and Helping Hands to help those experiencing homelessness. \$67.20 was sent to Salvation Army and \$67.21 to Helping Hands.

November-December: The Lafayette County Food Pantry and Lutheran World Relief for people facing food insecurity.

IN OUR PRAYERS

We remember in our prayers:



Congregation: Gladys Christensen, Jean Belanger, Les Torstenson, David Chambers, and Gloria Blaser.

Friends, Family, & Neighbors: Suzi Osterday, Joan Miller (Jan Riechers' sister), Ray Meier, Linda Judkins, Richard Roelli (Greg's brother), Duane Jorgenson, and Buck Virtue (heart issues).

Deaths: the families of Neil Ward and Keith Siegenthaler



Celebration!



Birthdays

Curtis Blosch (12/2)

Wiley Zasada (12/5)

Diane Bredeson (12/12)

Jennifer Kottke (12/24)

Conrad Blosch (12/2)

Kim Kammes (12/11)

Debbie Golackson (12/16)

Carol Kammes (12/26)

Steve Kottke (12/2)

Dave Zasada (12/11)

Stu Vamstad (12/20)

Ever Schilling (12/29)

Anniversaries None

Please let the office know if we have missed your birthday or anniversary in the listing so we can add your special day to our records.

CARE COMMITTEE

The Care Committee has collected goodies for **Christmas bags** for our homebound. All are welcome to put the bags together at 9:00 AM on **December 15** at Jalaine's house. Thank you to all who contributed.



The Care Committee had the **Blessing Tree** out, and great news, tags have all been taken. You may still help someone in need by calling Karen Reichling at Holy Rosary (776-4059). There are still plenty of families available to pick from. Thank you for being an angel for those people who have taken tags!!

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

Plans are to meet at Grace Fellowship Hall on December 17 at 3:00 PM for caroling to our homebound, the Manor, and Sienna Crest and then return to Grace for pizza. The organizers are Kitty and Eldon Wilson. Feel free to wear your fun Christmas accessories. Sign up at the church if possible if you plan to attend.



MITTEN TREE

Grace is again collecting new hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, neck gaiters, and socks this year. Help fill the Mitten Tree inside the narthex through December and early January. All donations are for the needs of our area school children.

COMMUNITY

Lafayette County Food Pantry



The Lafayette County Food Pantry is currently in **strong need of donations.** They have had a **large increase of families in need!** All types of groceries and household supplies are needed. Particular needs are **Hamburger Helper, personal care products** (shampoo, conditioner, lotion, etc.), **baby wipes, diapers** (sizes 2, 3, & 5). **Toilet paper and paper towels** are always needed.

Non-perishable donations can be dropped off at Grace in the shopping cart located near the fellowship area. **Frozen** products can be dropped off at the Food Pantry on Tuesdays or Thursdays (10:00-3:00). Tell them you represent Grace Lutheran Church, and your donation will be added to our ongoing count of pounds for 2023! **November total was 130#. The total for 2023 is 684#.**

Some interesting statistics: in 2020 (the year of covid) we served 4,990 people. In 2021 we served 3,407 people and in 2022 we served 3,631 but already in 2023 thru October we have served 4,184.

MEALS ON WHEELS

January is Grace's month to deliver the Meals on Wheels. We have a couple of weeks to fill with volunteers. Contact Marilyn Johns (608/482-1771) if you would like to help or sign up on the bulletin board outside the office.



Senior United for nutrition (S.U.N.) Program (including Meals-on-Wheels is at great risk right now due to funding issues. Pray for positive resolution and how the Holy Spirit might be asking us to participate in the solution.



SALVATION ARMY BELL-RINGING

This year Grace will be providing Bell-Ringers for the Salvation Army Kettle at Piggly Wiggly on Friday, December 8 from 9:00 AM-7:00 PM and Saturday, December 9 from 9:00 AM-3:00 PM. A sign-up sheet is on the board outside the office. Many volunteers are still needed. Funds support those in dire need in our county.

IMMUNIZATION CLINIC AT GRACE

The Wisconsin Council of Churches once again are sponsoring a vaccination clinic to be held at Grace on December 18 from 2:00-5:00 PM. They will be offering flu, Covid 19, RSV, tetanus, pneumonia, shingles, diphtheria, and pertussis vaccines.



Giving "Good Gifts" Through Lutheran World Relief

Lutheran World Relief has sent an urgent request to help families who live in remote locations in the world. Your gift given before December 25 will be matched by a group of caring donors.

Information and also gift-giving catalogues are available in the narthex or go to: <https://lwr.org/blog/2015/how-give-better-christmas-lwr-gifts>

GRACE in PICTURES



All Saints Sunday
November 6



Honoring Veterans
November 12



Mary Ann Roelli conducting
Children's Sermon



Blessing
Tree



Mitten
Tree

December 2023



Pastor's Schedule (608/732-9688)
 Pastor.GraceDar@gmail.com
 Mondays - Thursdays
 Fridays: Pastor's Day Off

Church Office Hours (Tana Risseuw)
 DarlingLutherans@gmail.com (608/776-4462)
 Tuesday-Thursday 8:00-1:00

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

	<p>December Dates to Remember</p> <p>Dec. 10 Last day for Home Bound donations</p> <p>Dec. 10 Poinsettia Orders due</p> <p>Dec. 10 Community Lessons & Carols Service 7:00 PM - Trinity Episcopal in Min. Pt.</p> <p>Dec. 17 Christmas Caroling to Homebound</p> <p>Dec. 18 Immunization Clinic at Grace</p>				1	2
<p>8:30 AM Worship/SS @ Grace</p> <p>10:30 AM Worship @ Hope</p> <p style="text-align: right;">3</p>	<p>11:00 AM The Good Book Study @ Grace</p> <p style="text-align: right;">4</p>	<p>10:00 AM Team Mary & Martha</p> <p style="text-align: right;">5</p>	<p>6:00-8:00 PM The Good Book Session I @ Grace Fellowship Hall</p> <p style="text-align: right;">6</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">7</p>	<p>Salavation Army Bell Ringing 9 AM-7 PM</p> <p style="text-align: right;">8</p>	<p>Bell Ringing 9 AM-3 PM</p> <p style="text-align: right;">9</p>
<p>8:30 AM Worship/SS @ Grace</p> <p>10:30 AM Worship @ Hope</p> <p>12:15 PM Grace Council</p> <p style="text-align: right;">10</p>	<p>11:00 AM The Good Book Study @ MP Pointer Caf�</p> <p style="text-align: right;">11</p>	<p>6:30 PM Hope Council</p> <p style="text-align: right;">12</p>	<p>5:30-6:45 PM Confirmation</p> <p style="text-align: right;">13</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">14</p>	<p>9:00 AM Assembly of Bags for the Homebound @ Jalaine's Home</p> <p style="text-align: right;">15</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">16</p>
<p>8:30 AM Worship/Grace Grace SS Sings</p> <p>10:30 AM Worship/Hope</p> <p>3:00 Christmas Caroling</p> <p style="text-align: right;">17</p>	<p>11:00 AM The Good Book Study @ Grace</p> <p>2:00-5:00 PM Immunization Clinic</p> <p style="text-align: right;">18</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">19</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">20</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">21</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">22</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">23</p>
<p>No Morning Worship Service</p> <p>7:00 PM Christmas Eve Service</p> <p style="text-align: right;">24</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CHRISTMAS DAY</p>  <p style="text-align: right;">25</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">26</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">27</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">28</p>	<p>Newsletter Deadline</p> <p style="text-align: right;">29</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">30</p>
<p>8:30 AM Worship/Grace</p> <p>10:30 AM Worship/Hope</p> <p style="text-align: right;">31</p>			 <p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">Merry Christmas</p>			



Grace Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

1302 Clay St • Darlington, WI 53530

Return Service Requested



Mission Statement

We are Grace people. Jesus Christ sends us out to:

- ✚ Feed the hungry
- ✚ Welcome every child
- ✚ Seek out the stranger
- ✚ Give thanks to God in all things
- ✚ Follow the way of the cross

Church phone: 608.776.4462
 Church email: darlinglutherans@gmail.com
 Facebook: [Facebook.comGraceLutheran.Darlington](https://www.facebook.com/GraceLutheran.Darlington)
 Website: GraceLutheranDarlington.net
 Pastor's email: Pastor.GraceDar@gmail.com
 Pastor's phone: 608.732.9688

Inside

Pg	
1	Worship News
2	The Good Book
2	Words of Gratitude
2	Poinsettias
3	Worship Leaders Schedule
3	Fellowship Schedule
4	Council Information
4-5	Congregational Vitality Survey
6	Celebration
6	In Our Prayers
6	Care Committee
7	Community Reports
8	December Calendar

Newsletter Deadline
 Items need to be submitted for the
 January Newsletter by December 29

