



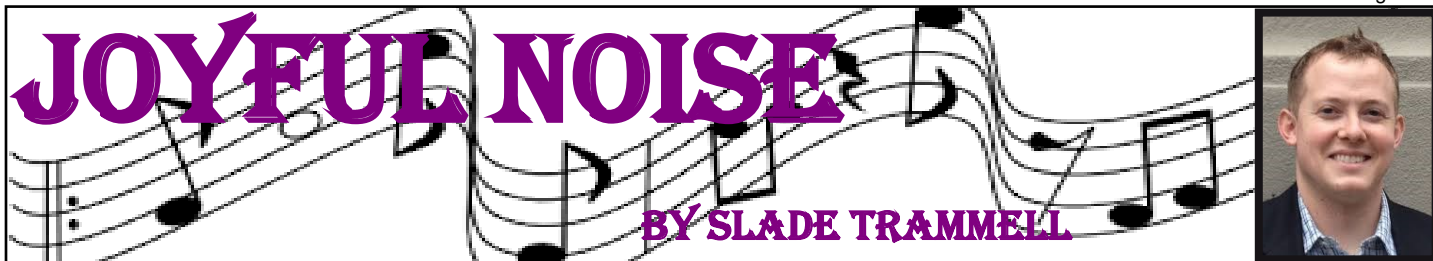
THE LIGHT

December 2023

Grace Lutheran Church

Silent Night, Holy Night

Photo by Stan Long



'New and Glorious Morn' Sung by Choir on 17th

On Sunday December 17, Grace's congregation unites for one service at 10 a.m. to hear members of New Creation and Chancel Choir sing a Christmas cantata. This year, the combined group will sing "A New and Glorious Morn" by Lloyd Larson.



Larson, a native of Illinois currently living in Minnesota, has been a leading composer of sacred choral music for the past forty years. "A New and Glorious Morn" was released earlier this year, and perfectly combines the urgency of Advent with the jubilant arrival of Christmas.

The character of the music ranges from reverently somber to gloriously joyful, and is the perfect vehicle to unite traditional and contemporary worship. We hope that you will all join us for this happy occasion!

Advent Monday Morning Bible Study

Dates: 12-4, 12-11, 12-18

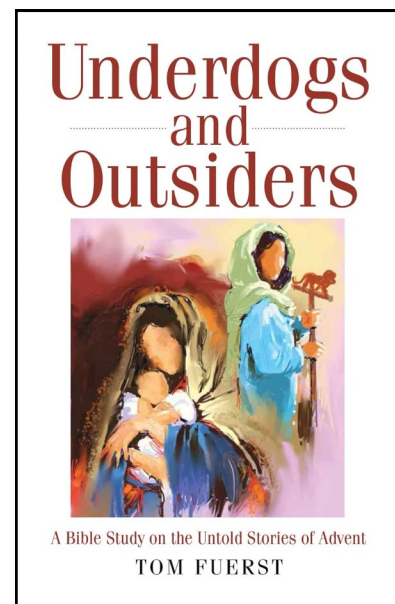
Time: 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Where: Room 101

What: *Underdogs and Outsiders: A Bible Study on the Untold Stories of Advent*– available on Amazon*

Participants are invited to bring a bible.

*participants are not required to buy the book to attend.



BOTH SERVICES ARE NOW IN THE SANCTUARY

9:00 a.m. Contemporary: In Person, Sanctuary

11:15 a.m. Traditional: In-Person, Sanctuary

Services on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHKKSX_JwSTrvl-LqdrbGlw

Pastor Rosalina (Rosy) Rivera

Keep the 'Light of Christ Bright' This Advent Season



*A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God"*

Isaiah 40:3

Grace and peace to you all! For those of you who don't know who I am, I am Rev. Rosalina Rivera, your new Pastor. I will officially begin on December 1st and I am looking forward to getting to know all of you as I prepare for my move next week to Oak Ridge following Thanksgiving with my family.

Prepare. That word has been rolling around my mind a lot the last several months and certainly a term we all know as we enter the season of Advent. We celebrate Advent not only by thanking God for Christ's first coming to earth as a baby, but also for his presence among us today through the Holy Spirit, and in preparation and anticipation of his final coming at the end of the age. The word *advent* comes from the Latin term *adventus* meaning "arrival" or "coming," particularly the coming of something having great importance. Advent season, then, is both a time of joy-filled, anticipatory celebration of the arrival of Jesus Christ and a preparatory period of repentance, meditation, and penance.

For me, I have been preparing for months. Preparing for a new call. Preparing for a new home. Preparing to meet lots of new people, just to name a few. Since I have been on leave from call, I have also been spiritually preparing for the time when I will once again preside over the sacraments. It is a holy moment to baptize someone and serve the Lord's supper to all who come to receive it. Here are a few questions to ponder: What do you do to prepare to receive that precious gift of Holy sacraments? What do you do to prepare to celebrate the coming of Christ during the Advent season?

I'm sure for many, by the time you read this article, your homes will be decorated for the season. Perhaps invitations are being sent to family and friends for the holidays or maybe someone is busy decorating an ugly sweater! I know this season can get very busy and hectic. You need only to look at our church calendar to see that even as a church, yes, we are busy too. However, it is my hope that you remember to pause, reflect and enjoy the season—especially in all the preparation! I encourage you this year, amidst your preparations, to be sure to make some room. For what you may ask? Be sure to leave room to truly prepare your heart and minds to once again celebrate the coming of our Lord. If I remember correctly, we have a Chrismon tree. I hope to see the Greek alphabet letters Alpha and Omega as they are Advent symbols. This comes from Revelation 1:8: "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "Who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." This is truly a reminder of the reason for the season!

My brothers and sisters in Christ, may the preparations you make this Advent season keep the light of Christ bright in your hearts this season. I'm looking forward to sharing that light with you all soon!

Always a servant of Christ,
Pastor Rosy

Grace Mission Statement

**Love Jesus and help others love Him
through word and actions.**



Lighting a Candle for the Saints



Above and at right, Choir member Stacey Garrick assists Grace parishioners in celebrating All Saints Sunday on November 5, by having them light a candle for their dearly departed friends and family members.

Photos by Pat Hope

Helpful Hearts and Hands Needed

Christmas Baskets and Angel Tree gifts will be distributed to 26 families on Saturday, December 16. Volunteers are needed for Christmas baskets to help unload non-perishable food at the church on Wednesday afternoon, December 13, after 3-3:30 p.m. fill baskets on Thursday and Friday, and on Saturday morning, December 16, from 9-12:00 p.m. to unload perishable food, fill baskets and place the baskets in families' vehicles. If you have any questions or want to volunteer, contact Phil Stumbo at (865) 482-3048 or pstumbo@comcast.net.

We will follow a similar schedule for Angel Tree gifts. The Angel Tree has been set up in the front entryway. The tags with the children's names have been placed on the tree and are ready to be chosen. The gifts need to be brought to the church by Thursday, December 14, at the latest. The gifts will be loaded into families' vehicles along with the food baskets on Saturday morning, December 16.



Stewardship Pledge Reminder

If you have not yet submitted your Stewardship Pledges for 2024, please submit them to the church office or place them in the offering plate as soon as possible. They are very important in planning God's work at our Church. If needed, pledge forms are available in the Narthex or church office.

Thank you, Stewarding Commission

December Love Offering - Open

December Happenings

Sunday School (Christian Education) for children and youth meet at 10:00 a.m. in Jacob's Ladder room. If you have any questions about youth Christian Education, please contact Donna Gurecki (865-599-1238).

The adult Sunday School class meets in Room 101 at 10 a.m. every Sunday. Everyone is welcome.

Is there interest in a CPR class?? Please let Donna Gurecki know if you would be interested in a class.

The prayer shawls are now located in the Narthex credenza.

Help for Lutherans in Ukraine: Lutheran Disaster Response: Eastern Europe Crisis Response (ELCA.org/ disaster). The ELCA is sending aide to our sister Lutheran churches in Ukraine and several neighboring countries. You can help!

Blanket Workshop: makes blankets for distribution to Lutheran World Relief. Meetings are on the first, third, and fifth Thursdays of the month from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Everyone is welcome to join in, or just stop by to see what is happening. Sewing skills are not required.

Grace Photography Club: The club will not meet again until next year. Let Stan Long (865-356-2871, Longse@aol.com) know if you're interested in participating in this group.

Grace Writers is on hiatus until March, when in-person meetings will resume. **Poetry Pie**, which meets on Zoom, will not meet on December 25, but will resume meetings January 29.

2023 Oak Ridge Christmas Parade

is December 9 at 6:00 p.m. This year's theme is "Sleigh Ride", and Grace has a float! It's free to participate, and free for the public to attend! Start-

ing at 6:00PM, we'll once again travel down the Oak Ridge Turnpike and end at the Oak Ridge High School.

Photo by Christy Gipson



Poinsettias Done Differently This Year

This year we are doing things differently. Instead of contributing to purchasing a poinsettia we are asking you to give money for the food pantry in honor of or in memory of a loved one.



Poinsettias will still decorate the Sanctuary. If you would like to make a contribution, please fill out a form with your donation. There are forms in the Narthex and by the back door.

You may place the form in the offering plate or return it to the church office. Checks should be made payable to Grace Lutheran Church and designated for Food Pantry.

December Events

December 2 – Hanging of The Greens – 9 a.m. to noon. Lunch at 11 a.m.

December 4—Advent Bible Study 10-11:30 a.m., Room 101

December 6 — Advent Service, 6:15 p.m.

December 9 — Cocoa, Cookies, and Christmas Fun, 10 a.m., in front vestibule

December 11 — Advent Bible Study 10-11:30 a.m., Room 101

December 13 —Advent Service, 6:15 p.m.

December 14 — Angel Tree gifts due back to church.

December 16 — Christmas Food Baskets and Angel Tree distribution

December 17 – Christmas Cantata – **One 10 a.m. service**

December 18 — Advent Bible Study 10-11:30 a.m., Room 101

December 24 – **NO Morning Worship**; 4 p.m. service with Children's Pageant and 9 p.m. candlelight service

December 31 – Lessons & Carols — **One 10 a.m. Service**

Cocoa, Cookies and Christmas Fun Dec. 9!

On Saturday, December 9 at 10:00 a.m. we will have pre-Christmas fun for children in the front vestibule. Bundle up! Activities will include decorating a tree, singing songs, crafts and Christmas stories.

The event will last about an hour. All kids are welcome (ages 3-12), and you are encouraged to invite friends. **Please let the office know by December 7 by 1:00 p.m. how many to expect, because we don't want to run out of cookies!**



Coffee, Tea, and Candy Make Great Stocking Stuffers

DON'T FORGET we sell coffee, tea and chocolate. Sigrid Ludemann started this ministry at Grace some 20 years ago when Lutheran World Relief (LWR) began working with small-scale coffee and cocoa farmers around the world to improve the quality, yield and value of crops and they could earn enough income to support their families and communities.

A portion of all proceeds from LWR Fair Trade products sold at Grace goes to the LWR's Small Farmer Fund.

These items are located in the church entranceway and make good stocking stuffers.

Advent Gathering/ Hanging of the Greens, Dec. 2nd

Please join us for the Advent Gathering/Hanging of the Greens on Saturday, December 2, starting at 9 a.m.

Decorating the church will begin at 9 a.m., activities for all ages to engage their creative spirit from 10 a.m. -12 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall, lunch served starting at 11 a.m. Please join us for a time of fellowship to bring in the Advent season.

December Birthdays

Sarah Lorenz	2
Ingrid Busch	3
Chris Bauman	5
Danny Joy	6
Lisa Burtis	6
Sarah Bafford	9
Ken Joy	11
Janet Rawl	13
Jacob Weber	14
Debbie Weight	14
Ladonna Meyer	16
Carol Hulsey	17
Nelson Lingle	22
Heidi Peterson	26
Rachel Johnson	31

If you have a name you would like to add to the birthday list or a correction, please call the church office at 483-3787.

The President's Corner by Valerie Hansen

'Thank You' to Call Committee for 'Diligent Work'



It seems fitting that as we begin the Advent season, the Grace congregation is also enthusiastically waiting the coming of our new pastor! Pastor Rosy Rivera will start on December 1, and we look forward to the new energy and ideas that she will bring to Grace. Thank you to the members of the call committee for their diligent work during the call process.

- Approximately 35 pledges have been received for 2024 – please turn yours in so we can plan the budget for 2024.
- Larry Sparks, Treasurer; Janet Rawl, Financial Secretary; and Ken Joy, Bookkeeper have all agreed to continue to serve in those positions for 2024 and Council approved their appointments. We are greatly appreciative for their hard work to keep track of the church's finances.

Commission chairs should invite Pastor Rosy to your next commission meeting so she can learn about our ministries.

Other news from the November Council meeting include:

- Annual Reports will be due in early January.
- January congregational meeting is tentative scheduled for January 21.

A wonderful farewell reception was held for Pastor Paula on November 26 (See photos on Pages 8-9). She has served us well as interim pastor and will be missed. However, as per God's plan, it is time for Grace Church to welcome a new pastor and for Pastor Paula to follow the path that God creates for her.

Merry Christmas!

Blessings, Joy, and Peace.



Baptism of Luke Fitzgerald Bauman

Pastor Paula baptized the Bauman baby on November 12. Pictured from left are Luke's godparents Gabe and Claire Archer, sister Bella, brother Wyatt, dad Chris, mom Sarah and Pastor Paula.

Goodbye to Pastor Paula Filled with Song, Laughter and Tears



Photo by Pat Hope



Pastor Paula's last Sunday began with her carrying a sign that stated "The End is Near," and ended with a reception in the fellowship hall where lots of laughter and tears were shared, not to mention lots of good food.

Pastor Paula has served 14 months as Grace's Interim Pastor. November 30 was her last day. This is her second time to serve Grace. She was Minister of Music for several years under Pastor Damos before going on to be ordained and having her own church in Greeneville, Tennessee.

Photos by Stan Long unless otherwise noted



Lots To Be Thankful For. . .



. . .like family, friends, and lots of food. A fellowship hall full of people attended Grace's annual Thanksgiving meal on November 12, enjoying a potluck dinner of turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes and gravy, and a wealth of sides, appetizers, and desserts.

Photos by Pat Hope



Proclaiming Commission Summary

Your Proclaiming Commission has been very busy recently, working to enhance our hospitality activities, supporting our Ministry to the International Community including our ESOL and OLSE classes, and providing support to things that make Grace better known in the community. We've restarted coffee fellowship after both services. We've recently supported the Community Outreach Team's Rummage and Bake sales, publicized the Trunk or Treat event, and now are spreading the word far and wide about a new venture in Advent for young children. Judy Goans is spearheading this, calling it "Cocoa, Cookies, and Christmas Fun." See p. 6 for details. We're also adding a Recovery Ministry to our portfolio of activities that support folks and may draw in people from the community. Stan Long is the key point of contact and made a presentation to Council on November 27. Thank you, members of Grace who are involved in these ministries and hospitality undertakings!

Name Tags on Sundays, Please!

Pastor Rosy requests that we wear name tags for the first few months of her ministry to help her get acquainted with the congregation. Proclaiming will make name tags available, not the disposable kind, but instead we're going to try going back to the ones that you pin on and can re-use. Please help Pastor Rosy by doing this, especially on Sunday mornings as an act of hospitality to her. A bonus is that it helps our visitors and newer folks as well!

OLSE Spanish Class

We're hoping to restart our Spanish class if a new teacher can be found. Please contact Nancy Munro if you would like to give this a try!

ESOL Classes Need Teachers

We're delighted to welcome a new volunteer, Katherine Grubb, a friend from St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, who will assist with Grace's evening beginner class. Dorothy DeVan is the lead teacher on Tuesday evenings. Pr. Sylvia Countess who has been working with the early beginners hopes to continue despite having started a new interim assignment in Greenville, Tennessee. Katherine will assist her.

We also would like to add an early intermediate class on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings from 9:30 to 11:00 or 11:30. This would be a follow-on to Eunice Search's morning beginner classes and use life skills textbooks just as she and Dorothy do. If you're interested in this opportunity, you're welcome to observe Eunice's class and discuss the need with her. You could also take a workshop on teaching ESOL that is offered quarterly by the Knoxville Internationals Network.

Please let Nancy Munro (nbmunro318@icloud.com, 865-483-6811) know if you're interested in trying your hand at teaching an early intermediate class.

The Grace Food Pantry needs your help, because funds are running low. Many thanks to those who have donated either money or food recently. Please make a generous donation, earmarked for the Food Pantry, so that we can continue this important ministry.

Israel-Hamas War Resources and Statements

In the past weeks we have borne witness to the horrors of the escalating crisis between Israel and Hamas. In response to the Hamas attacks in southern Israel on Oct. 7 and Israel's declaration of war against Hamas, including the ongoing siege of Gaza, the ELCA offers statements from some of our Lutheran and global partners in the region. Included are ELCA resources for a deeper understanding of the context, the humanitarian crises of the current war, and the ELCA's work for a just peace in Palestine and Israel. Learn more at this link:

[Resources for the Crisis in the Holy Land - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America \(elca.org\)](https://www.elca.org/resources-for-the-crisis-in-the-holy-land)

Birthday Party!

Carol Donath's kids threw her a grand birthday luncheon on November 5 at Calhoun's in Oak Ridge. Many Grace friends attended as shown here.

by Pat Hope



NUTS! NUTS! NUTS!

The Clinton Lions Club is selling a variety of nuts again this year, including:

- Plain pecan halves
- Plain pecan pieces,
- Praline covered pecans,
- Cashews
- Mixed nuts (no peanuts)
- Milk Chocolate Amaretto covered pecans
- Chocolate covered peanuts.



These are all one pound (16oz.) bags. The cost per bag is \$11.00.

You may contact Neal Vaughan at 865-457-4664 and leave a message or contact him by e-mail at neallion@comcast.net.

New Display Board is Evidence Grace is Counting its Blessings



Grace Food Pantry Makes a Difference in Our Community

Most of you are aware that one of the outreach ministries of Grace Lutheran is the Food Pantry. But do you know what is involved in carrying out this ministry? It takes a lot of volunteers and money to purchase the food we give out.

The Grace Lutheran Food Pantry serves residents in Anderson, Morgan, & Roane Counties. Those receiving food are required to complete forms that provides information required by the USDA (name, address, number in household, & source of income.) That information needs to be updated annually. Families are only allowed to pick up food once a month. They stay in their cars and a volunteer goes out to get the names of the clients.

Food is purchased from The Second Harvest Food Bank of East Tennessee each week. The food can be purchased from Second Harvest at a much lower price than it could be purchased in a grocery store. Most weeks, Second Harvest has USDA foods & produce available. Those items do not cost anything. Toilet paper & soap are purchased from Dollar Tree. We spend \$1,000 to \$1,500 at Second Harvest each month and \$480 each month at Dollar Tree. Panera donates whatever bread is left over from the previous day.

We have a group of volunteers with trucks that go to Maryville to pick up the food at Second Harvest every Wednesday. There is a group of men who unload the truck when it returns to the church and unpacks the food and puts it on the shelves.

Each family is given 6-8 bags of food. They are given chicken & tomato soup, tuna, green beans, corn, cereal (when available), rice, pinto beans or other legumes, mac & cheese, spaghetti, spaghetti sauce, muffin mix, pancake mix, peanut butter, canned fruit, bread, toilet paper & soap. When available we give out meat, eggs, margarine, cheese, and produce.

FOOD PANTRY NEEDS:

- A couple more drivers with trucks to pick up food on Wednesdays. (A second truck is needed if the order is more than 1,000 pounds of food.)
- Egg cartons – we often receive boxes of donated eggs and need cartons in which to put them.
- More volunteers to serve as substitutes.
- We would also like to have a volunteer who is willing to learn how to do the ordering and getting the names of the families in line to pick up food.
- Monetary donations and/or food items.



THE FOOD PANTRY DOES NOT NEED ANY MORE BAGS OF ANY KIND AT THIS POINT IN TIME. We have two big trash cans full of bags and a large garbage bag full of bags. We don't have the space to store any more bags right now & we don't want to create a fire hazard. You will be advised when bags are needed again.

In November, the Food Pantry served 143 families on the three Fridays we were open. Of the 391 individuals served, 132 were under 17 and 106 were over 60. We are serving roughly 10 new families each week. The need is there and is only going to get larger as food assistance programs are cut.

We are so thankful for all the donations that are given whether it be time, money, or non-perishable items.

Article by Donna Hoglund
Photos by Gloria Caton

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Condolences

Jim Slice — November 2
Sharon Riley — November 13

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Want to win a gift card? Find the three poinsettias. NOTE: This will be the last gift card. This game is being cancelled for lack of participation.



December marks the end of the year and the beginning of the holiday season. See if you can find the three Poinsettias in this issue.

Please send the page numbers where you find them to Pat Hope (thetwohopes@aol.com) by Dec. 31. Only email or text messages (865-310-0722) accepted. Prize to be awarded in January.

The one pictured here doesn't count.

The three fall leaves in Nov. were on Pages 8, 16, 19.

Congratulations to past winners:

- Anne Douglas — Nov. Fall Leaves
- Bethany Lemons — October Pumpkins
- Betty Anne Domm — Sept. Coffee Cups
- Pastor Paula — August Hot Dogs
- NO CONTEST IN JULY**
- Anne Douglas — June Caps
- Rhonda Ashburn — May Hearts
- Janet Rawl — April Eggs
- Donna Hoglund — March Clocks
- Paula Smith — February Hearts
- Lorraine Huynh — January Hats
- Crista Froeling — December Snowmen
- Emilie Damos — Nov. Turkeys