

*“Serving all people by sharing God’s Word
and Gift of Grace”*

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Erskine, MN 56535

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The Scroll

Grace Lutheran
Church

December 2023

PASTOR'S CORNER

Happy New Year! I know it's December, not January, however a new year has begun in the life of the church. Our annual cycle of events in the church year is a joyful way to learn the life of Christ and how to walk in a manner worthy of being called one of His own. As Lutherans we have a 3-year cycle which we use to cover most of the Bible during that time. This year we are in year B which settles heavily into the gospel of Mark. This is a time to get to know this disciple of Jesus as he shares his words on the life of Christ. Let us commit to regularly reading Mark's gospel.

In this season of Advent, we look to the new life ahead of us at with the anticipation of Jesus' coming to earth. While we look to his birth as one of us, we also look to Jesus' second coming. This has been foretold in the Bible as an event to bring in the fullness of time and the entry into the final glory of Jesus Christ.

Mark 13: 26-27; 35-36 26And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. 27And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. 35Therefore stay awake — for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning — 36lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. 37And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.”

Christians are called to get serious about our Lord and Savior, to learn and to grow in the love and knowledge of God. It is fitting to begin our yearly journey looking to the end, reading the last page of the great story so that we can truly appreciate all the rest.

We love to celebrate the Christmas season, but let's remember to include the coming Christ child into our festivities. Jesus came to live with us, that's the name we call Emmanuel – God with us.

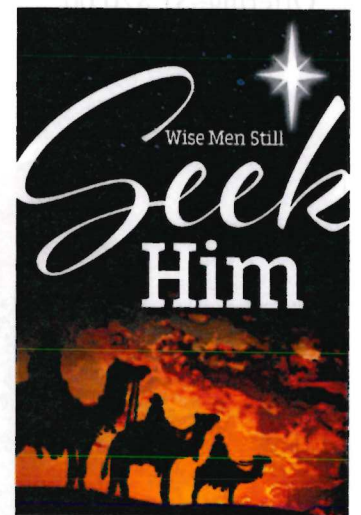
May the love of the Father fill you all. Come Holy Spirit and give us faith and all that is Holy.

In ministry together,

Pastor Pam

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The Grace Lutheran Church Council will meet in regular session on Wednesday December 13th at 7:00 PM. A reminder that all regular council meetings are open to all members of Grace Church.

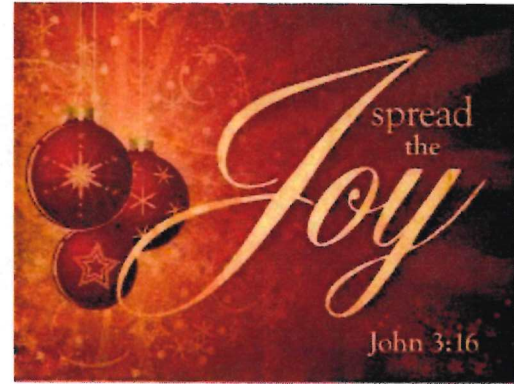


November 5th:
Attendance~ 92
Offering~\$3,025.00

November 12th:
Attendance~ 56
Offering~\$1,730.00

November 19th:
Attendance~ 82
Offering~\$2,522.00

November 26th:
Attendance~ 63
Offering~\$1,820.00



The Grace WNALC does not meet during the winter months. See you in the Spring.

Hope Circle: Will not meet in December

Rebecca Circle: December 28th at 6:30 PM at the church.



REMINDER – Please save your grocery receipts from Groceries Plus in Erskine and Jered's Grocery in McIntosh. Both stores are donating one percent of the total purchases to the youth group. There is a container for the receipts at the church in the hallway by the coat racks.



- * Pastor Pam Thorson
- * Annette Farder
- * Paul Mahlen
- * Carr Smeby
- * Wendy Smeby
- * LeRoy Johnson
- * Maci Smeby
- * Allen Jenson
- * Steve & Linda Evenson
- * Becki Haugen
- * Judy Boucher
- * David E. Hamre
- * Dianne Hamre
- * Bob Magnussen
- * Dan Salvhus
- * Jesse Hickman
- * Dustin Close
- * Greg Kaster
- * Jolene Bradley
- * Torrey Erickson
- * Shut-ins and Nursing Home members
- * Ukraine

Grace Lutheran Church

DECEMBER 2023

CIRCLES
Hope at the church
Rebecca at the church

Ushers :

- Comunion Assistants:**
Mavis Haugom
Betty Lundin
- Altar Flowers:**
Hope Circle
- Altar Guild:**
Lesly Tradewell
Cindy Nelson
- R= Reader**
A=Acolyte
P=Power Point
DECEMBER 3rd:
R~ Nancy Jenson
A~ Carson Fortman and Logan Johnson
P~ Carter Fortman and Rian Bergh
- DECEMBER 10th:**
R~ Hollie Stewart
A~ Shelby Shimpa and Hannah Shimpa
P~ Charley Carlson and George Juve
- DECEMBER 17th:**
R~ Tyler Brekken
A~ Faith Omundson and Hope Omundson
P~ Lillian Shimpa and Jareth Walk
- DECEMBER 24th:**
R~ Yvonne Halvorson (10:30 a.m.)
A~ Malaina Jax and Bella Senn
P~ Brekken Gunderson and Karl Jax
- DECEMBER 31st:**
R~ Mavis Haugom
A~ Tatum Smeby and Addyson Morgenroth
P~ Kale Smeby and Owen Strom

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3 9am-ABS 9:15am-Sunday School 10:30am- Worship w/Holy Comm.	4 9:30am-LBS 10am- Rebroadcast	5 7am-MBS @ Ness Café 2pm-BSF 8pm-AA mtg.	6 8am-Prayer Gathering 1:55pm-RT Class 6:00pm-Conf. Class 6:30pm- Rebroadcast	7 7pm-Orchestra Practice	8 10am-Pr. @ Fair Meadows	9 9am- Rebroadcast
10 9am-ABS 9:15am-Sunday School 10:30am- Worship w/Holy Comm.	11 9:30am-LBS 10am- Rebroadcast	12 7:00am-MBS @ Ness Café 2pm-BSF 8pm-AA mtg.	13 8am-Prayer Gathering 1:55pm-RT Class 6pm-Conf. Class 6:30pm- Rebroadcast 7pm-Council Mtg.	14 3-7pm-Food Shelf is open	15 SCROLL ARTICLES DUE	16 9am- Rebroadcast
17 9am-ABS 9:15am-Sunday School 10:30am-Worship w/ Sunday School Program	18 9:30am-LBS 10am- Rebroadcast	19 7:00am-MBS @ Ness Café 2pm-BSF 8pm-AA mtg.	20 8am-Prayer Gathering 10:30am-Pr. @ Poplar Meadows 1:55pm-RT Class 6:00pm-Conf. Class 6:30pm- Rebroadcast	21 10am-2pm-Food Shelf is open 7pm-Orchestra Practice	22	23 9am- Rebroadcast
24 Christmas Eve 10:30am- Worship 4:00pm-Christmas carol sing 4:30pm-Christmas Eve Candlelight	25 Merry Christmas 10am- Rebroadcast	26 7:00am-MBS @ Ness Café 2pm-BSF 8pm-AA mtg.	27 8am-Prayer Gathering 6:30pm- Rebroadcast	28 6:30pm-Rebecca Circle	29	30 9am- Rebroadcast
31 9am-ABS 10:30am- Worship				Greeters: 3rd: Dave & Bonnie Salveson 10th: Dean & Mary Ellen Salveson	17th: Joe & Dorothy Sandberg 24th: Scott Sandberg	31st: Keith & Joanne Sannes

GRACE COUNCIL MEMBERS

Pr. Pam Thorson	Pastor	270-872-8269
John Carlson	President	
Nick Walk	Vice President	637-2219
Yvonne Halvorson	Secretary	687-5190
Dorothy Sandberg	Financial Secretary	687-3575
Jim Ferden	Treasurer	563-2377
Gary Walter	Deacon	687-3074
Gene Haugom	Trustee	563-3292
Paul Mahlen	Trustee	687-5343
Ray LaBrecque	Trustee	
Ann Brekken	Superintendent / Education	687-2205
Sarah Strom	Education	687-3488
Pam Walk	Education	637-2219
Shar Hill	Education	
Hollie Stewart	Pres. WNALC	687-3730
Lori Hole	Stewardship	687-3585
Tyler Brekken	Stewardship	687-2205
Becky Lindseth	Stewardship	

Nativity of Our Lord

December 24, 2023 • **Christmas Eve**
 First Reading - Isaiah 7:10-14
 Psalm - Psalm 110:1-4
 Second Reading - 1 John 4:7-16
 Gospel - Matthew 1:18-25

Nativity of Our Lord

December 25, 2023 • **Christmas Day**
 First Reading - Isaiah 52:7-10
 Psalm - Psalm 2:1-12
 Second Reading - Hebrews 1:1-6; 7-12
 Gospel - John 1:1-14; 15-18

LECTIONARY READINGS FOR DECEMBER

First Sunday of Advent

December 3, 2023
 First Reading - Isaiah 64:1-9
 Psalm - Psalm 80:1-7
 Second Reading - 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
 Gospel - Mark 13:24-37

Second Sunday of Advent

December 10, 2023
 First Reading - Isaiah 40:1-11
 Psalm - Psalm 85:1-13
 Second Reading - 2 Peter 3:8-14
 Gospel - Mark 1:1-8

Third Sunday of Advent

December 17, 2023
 First Reading - Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
 Psalm - Psalm 126:1-6
 Second Reading - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
 Gospel - John 1:6-8, 19-28

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 24, 2023
 First Reading - 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
 Psalm - Psalm 89:1-5, 19-29
 Second Reading - Romans 16:25-27
 Gospel - Luke 1:26-38

First Sunday after Christmas

December 31, 2023
 First Reading - Isaiah 61:10-62:3
 Psalm - Psalm 111:1-10
 Second Reading - Galatians 4:4-7
 Gospel - Luke 2:22-40



Giving Options

Not only can you give through your offering envelope on Sunday morning, but our church offers other options to receive your offering:

Automatic Giving – You can set up monthly or weekly automatic deductions from your bank account. Contact the church office (218-687-4035) for a form to complete.
 Online Giving – There are several links throughout our website (www.gracechurcherskine.org) that will allow you to give a one-time or regular donation from your bank account, credit card, or debit card.
 Mobile Giving – You can utilize your mobile device and scan the following code –



Benevolence Ideas

Our church has several special funds to meet needs that can't be met through our General Fund. Currently, these special funds are: Building Maintenance/Improvements, Vacation Bible School, and Samaritan's Purse Shoeboxes. In addition, our church houses the Grace Community Food Shelf and we ask for donations on their behalf. Finally, our church is a part of the Grace Cemetery Association and we ask for donations on their behalf for the maintenance of the Synod, Pioneer, and Fairview Cemeteries in rural Erskine. Please contact Jim Ferden if you have any questions.



October 2023 Financial Summary

Congregational Offering to the General Fund - \$16,658.32

Expenses:
 Administrative - \$5,802.68
 Education - \$220.84
 Mission Outreach - \$2,500.00
 Pastoral - \$8,113.09
 Worship - \$743.83
 Total Expenses - \$17,380.44



Did you know?
 If you are a Thrivent member, you are eligible to receive money to help support

events you or others are having. Simply gather a team of friends, family or neighbors to put on a fundraiser, educational event or service activity. We'll provide the resources you need to get started – including up to \$250 in seed money. Clients with benefit membership are eligible to lead two Thrivent Action Teams per calendar year, and clients with associate membership are eligible to lead one per calendar year. There are many examples on the Thrivent website @ [Thrivent Action Teams Hub \(cotribute.co\)](https://www.thrivent.org/thrivent-action-teams-hub). Some ideas: Grandparents Day, Vacation Bible School, Fish Fry, Easter Festival, Food Shelf, Disaster Response Buckets/kits, K9's for Mobility, Quilts for Others, or Yarn for Prayer Shawls.
 Let's get together and figure out how we can use these benefits for the work of ministry.

~ Pastor Pam



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

COUNCIL MEETING

November 8, 2023

7:00 P.M.

'Serving all people by sharing God's Word and Gift of Grace'

Present: President John Carlson, Nick Walk, Yvonne Halvorson, Gene Haugom, Lori Hole, Gary Walter, Ann Brekken, Jim Ferden,

Call to Order: President John called the meeting to order.

Devotions: President John lead us in devotions. John opened with prayer. Our subject dealt with recognizing and using the gifts God has given us. We shared what we thought our gifts are which is always hard to do. We also shared our observations about the gifts we see in each other. We have a congregation filled with people who have a variety of gifts and we need to encourage each other to use these gifts in service and love.

Approve Agenda: Motion to approve the agenda by Gary. Seconded by Gene. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Jim reported.

Cash Flow Report

Undesignated funds available to

be used for October's General Fund expenses totaled \$18,683.13. This amount was more than the month's General Fund expenses totaling \$17,480.44.

Congregational giving to the General Fund was \$16,658.32. The monthly budget goal is \$20,221.69.

Noteworthy Other Giving: Love Offering for the month totaled \$1,400 which will be given to the Grace Backpack Program. Miscellaneous – \$1,000 energy rebate from OtterTail Power related to the improvements the Food Shelf made in the parsonage garage. It was passed through to the Food Shelf. This item also includes a small anonymous donation of \$766.35, a donation from the Grace NALCW of \$800.95 for the new communion table, and 3 donations totaling \$125.00 passed through to the designated funds.

Some of the noteworthy expenses this month included:
Mission Outreach: Miscellaneous – Pass through donations to Grace Food Shelf (\$50.00), Grace Youth Group (\$50.00), the anonymous gift to the Grace Youth Group (\$500.00), and pass through of the energy rebate (\$1,000.00) to the Grace Food Shelf.

Budget Report

We ended the month at approximately 16.9% or \$41,000 under budget.

All of the major budgeted expense categories ended under budget for the month.

History of the General Fund Balance

The General Fund balance increased nicely in October due to additional giving for the month

History of the General Fund Balance

The General Fund balance increased nicely in October due to additional giving for the month and monthly expenses being lower than last month.

Account Balances Report

Building Fund - Reflects regular donations made during the month (\$29.00). It also reflects expenses related to the separate elevator phone line (\$39.20), materials for repairs to the church and garage remodeling (\$634.75), new computers and accessories for the church office (\$3,281.83), and wireless microphones and accessories for worship (\$3,653.62).

President's Report:

WEM Community Youth Ministry-December 10th the youth service project is at Mac Manor in McIntosh at 2:00. We will meet at Mt Caramel at 1:00 for food and then a short instruction session and then to walk over and sing carols. We will be discussing possible activities like ski trip, tubing, XC skiing at Fertile, plus other service projects.

Fund Raising on the Go Fund me page. The goal is 5000 and so far, we are at 2900 with 25 people donating.

Committee Reports:

Education: Ann reported. 63 boxes were filled for the Shoebox project. They will be delivered by the deadline date. 5th and 6th grade will be shopping in early December for the Giving Tree. Sunday School Christmas program will be December 17th during Sunday service. Ann notified Pastor Pam and now the

Continued on Page 5



*December 24th
10:30 AM Worship*



*4:00 PM Christmas Carol sing
4:30 PM Christmas Eve Candlelight Service*



Christmas Poinsettia Garden

You are invited to bring in white or red poinsettias during Advent and Christmas for the sanctuary. These may be given in memory of someone or to the glory of God. Fill out a form and leave it in the office.

in honor of _____

in memory of _____

to the glory of God _____

Given by _____

GRACE WNALC, continued

The second blessing is the generosity of all of you at our Fall Auction. We were able to disburse \$10,000 to Missions this year.. Look for the list elsewhere in scroll. We disburse using the 1/3 suggestion of our church. 1/3 Local. 1/3 National. 1/3 Global. We are blessed!

~Hollie



WNALC 22023

DISBURSEMENTS

- ◆ Grace Education \$800
- ◆ Thomas Thorstad \$650
- ◆ WEM Giving Tree \$500
- ◆ Salvation Army \$500
- ◆ Ronald McDonald House in Fargo, ND \$500
- ◆ Lutheran Military \$650
- ◆ Kuwala Christian Girls School \$650
- ◆ Boys/Girls Club DL \$300
- ◆ Crisis Center DL \$500
- ◆ Life Care Center TRF \$500
- ◆ Northland Rescue Mission \$500
- ◆ North Country Food Bank \$700
- ◆ Grace Cemetery Association \$600
- ◆ NALS \$2000
- ◆ ELCM \$650

Total of Gifts~~\$10,000

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Eternal God, the hope of all humankind, you gave us the greatest gift of all in your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Son of God, you came as God's Light to shine brightly in the darkness of minds and hearts; bathe our world in your Light.

Jesus Christ, Word made flesh, make a way for the Good News of your Kingdom to reach every home, every heart, everywhere.

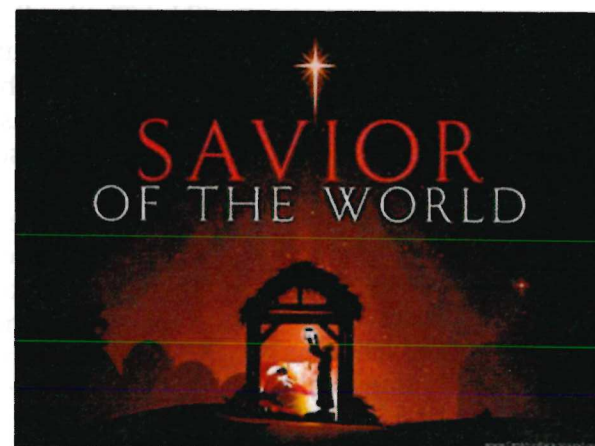
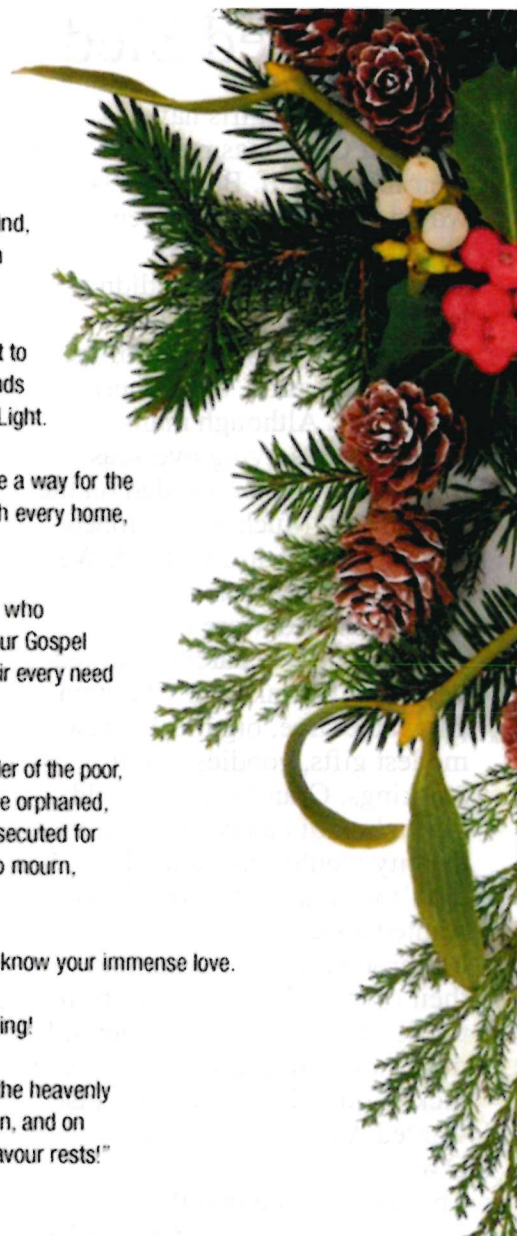
Protect and preserve the labourers who courageously declare the glory of your Gospel throughout the world. Provide for their every need and be their strength and joy.

Be the comforter, defender and provider of the poor, the helpless, the cold, the hungry, the orphaned, the weary, the oppressed, those persecuted for their faith in you, the sick, those who mourn, the aged and the little children.

Reveal yourself to those who do not know your immense love.

Bless those who rejoice at your coming!

Glorious Lord, we join our voices to the heavenly host and say: "Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests!"
Amen.



GRACE COUNCIL, continued

Council about preparing for her replacement for the coming year. Ann is going to resign after 14 years of service! Thank you Ann!

NALCW: Hollie reported. They are meeting next week on Thursday. Group 2 serves. Officers met previously and made decisions regarding the amounts to be dispensed by the NALCW. Designated \$10,000 in disbursements. The list will be approved at Thursday's meeting. All members received a letter with the proposed list this week. 182 served at Deer Hunters supper. \$2,426 gross received with \$823.00 for expenses. Electing officers next week. Becky has agreed to service as secretary again. A Vice President will be needed because Maxine is retiring. Thank you Maxine for EVERYTHING you have done!
Video Tech: Nick reported. 5th and 6th grade will have some mini-training on the video with Pam Walk. Nick still needs to install the two pulpit mics. Thank you Nick for all you continue to do keeping our technology running smoothly!

Food Shelf: Gene reported. No report since haven't been open since our last meeting. They sent invitations for the Thanksgiving meal and received responses for 32 meals.

Old Business:

Ushers: Daryl and John met. Kim gave them an updated list of ushers. They would really like to have more volunteers. Please consider serving.

Constitution Amendment for Deacons.

This will be tabled for now since it is going to be a 2 year for the process.

Youth protection plan: John had information to share that he's been researching.

New Business:

Advent Mid-Week Worship:

Council decided not to have these services this year.

Christmas Eve Service: Time will be 4:30 p.m. Nick will email GV to get the time slot for the service to be broadcast.

December 10 there will be a baptism and the Windblown music group will be here.

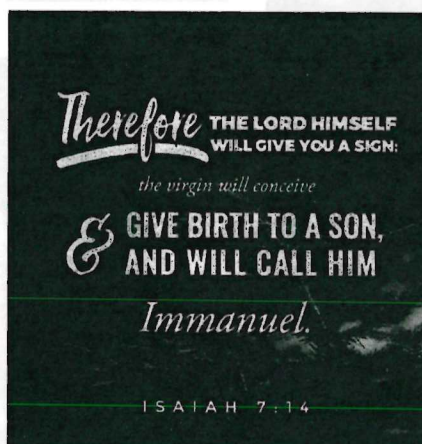
Announcements

Next month's meeting date is December 13 at 7:00 p.m.

President John closed with prayer.

Adjourn

Respectfully submitted,



This Thanksgiving we have been blessed with numerous things but two in particular here.

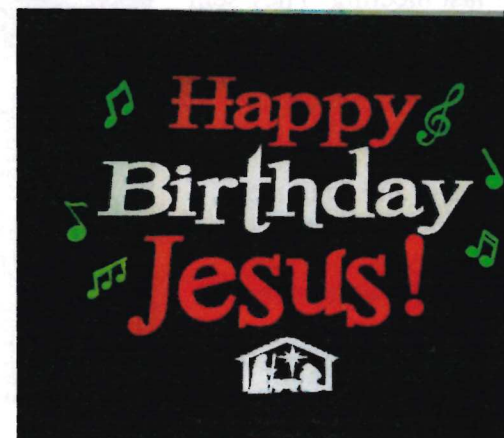
WNALC elections were held at our November meeting and officers will stay the same with the exception of the Vice-President job Maxine Walter has held this job and done such a good job. She is a blessing to this church. This is the list of what she does as VP.: Puts notice in paper and Garden Valley of our meetings 2 weeks before them. Receives call from Carlins's when a funeral is scheduled and calls serving group chair that is next to serve. Chair lines up their workers and food for the day and all in group prepare it. Call chair for group serving the WNALC monthly meeting. Call chair of each group for 2 pies to service at the Fall Auction. VP buys ice cream from our funds for this. Keeps the kitchen supplied: dish soap, coffee, paper products, foil, baggies, saran wrap, paper towels, s&p, sugar. American State Bank donates napkins. Ask at bank and bring to church. Conduct meeting if President is gone. Meet with officers to set up calendar for new year. Maxine has done such a good job and we are so thankful her. Would you consider VP or co-VP. A lot happens in this church. Many hands and feet are needed. How can we bring to the new year something that is meaningful to you? What would you like to see as a women's group in this church. Please share ideas for the coming year and beyond. Please consider if this is a call you can do.

Continued on Page 8

WEM Community Youth Ministry will hold their next gathering on December 10th. The youth service project is at Mac Manor in McIntosh at 2:00. We will meet at Mt Caramel at 1:00 for food and then a short instruction session and then to walk over and sing carols.



The Grace Sunday School will present their Christmas program on Sunday December 17th during the 10:30 AM worship service. In case the weather does not cooperate that Sunday, it will be held on Wednesday December 20th at 7:00 PM.



WHAT CHRISTMAS IS ALL ABOUT



And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them... And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

LUKE 2:9-11



The Red Sled

Seven-year-old girls have different Christmas priorities than their mature self. Back in 1944 it would be the same: different circumstances.

The country's economy didn't lend to fancy presents. The country was crawling out of the Great Depression, and America was at war. Although many fathers were serving overseas, mine was a farmer, needed on the Homefront. Much was rationed, but we raised our own food. We had it better than most.

Christmas gifts were not extravagant. My parents worked very hard to make our Christmas enjoyable: tree, big meal, a few modest gifts, goodies in our stockings. Grandmother would give a box of candy. A friend in the city would send something. I didn't want knit stuff or a book. I wanted a sled!

My brother and my sister had their own sleds, but I had a beat-up sled that had been brother's. I didn't want an old sled with a bad nick in one of the runners. I just wanted A RED SLED OF MY OWN!

The steep hill behind the barn was just right for sledding if I had my own new sled with smooth runners.

I dutifully got ready for Christmas: drew a picture of our house to give my parents; learned my lines for the school's Christmas play; practiced my part for the Sunday school program.

Then I spied out Mother's closet, even when I knew it was wrong. I just wanted to see if there was a big package that looked like a sled. But . . . The only thing with my name on it felt like a book. I

didn't want a book! I pouted. Daddy and my brother cut and brought a real Christmas tree inside. We all decorated it. Beautiful! I especially liked the red lights . . . like the sled I wanted! But there wouldn't be a sled. I knew it!

Hah! Search the farm for evidence of a sled. Just maybe. I had already looked inside. Now, I searched the barn, the shop, the hen houses. No sled. This was the worst Christmas ever. Christmas morning. No snow. Well, no sled; who needs snow? I ran downstairs in my night gown and looked. Just one glimpse told me that there were only two small presents for me. But, my stocking was bulging, so I knew there would at least be candy.

A working farm means breakfast before presents. The men, up since before daylight working with the cows and other animals, would be starved.

Then presents. I don't know what my brother and sister received, but mine was a book and a winter hat Mother made. I said, "Thank you," and smiled to mask my disappointment. That looked like the only Christmas for me.

And then Daddy said, "Thought there was another present."

"No! That's all." Mother said. "Uh Oh!" he laughed and sent my brother to the back porch. In a minute he was back with a . . . well, you guessed it: a beautiful red sled!

Big smile! A beautiful, bright red sled of my own!

There's more to the story. I went outside and checked where we kept the sleds to make a spot for mine. My heart

There's more to the story. I went outside and checked where we kept the sleds to make a spot for mine. My heart plummeted. The ugly little sled was gone. I realized that my beautiful red sled was the old one I hated. I ran into the house and looked at my sled under the tree. On examination I saw the nick had been sanded in an attempt to smooth it. Just an old sled made new.

Mother was in the kitchen making dinner. Oh, what a grouch I was!

"Mother! It's the OLD sled!" Well, you can imagine my little tirade.

Mother stopped what she was doing and sat down, taking me in her arms. With tears in her eyes, she loved on me as she talked.

She didn't fuss about lack of money, or that I should be glad to have what other children would love to have. Instead she told me about being made new.

"June, your sled is just like people. You see, when Jesus comes into a person's heart, that old heart is changed. Yes, it's the same person, but Jesus gives that person a clean heart."

It was not until I was much older and faith in Jesus as my Savior was born in me, I finally knew of the best present of all. He came to earth that very first Christmas to give me Eternal life . . . the BEST Christmas ever.

I am still me, including all the NICKS of my old self, but I am a new person in Jesus.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

~June W. Titus