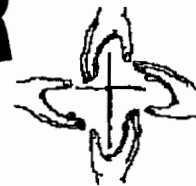


GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER



DECEMBER 2009

VOLUME 9 ISSUE 12

Visitors at Christmas

by *Jerry Ousley*

11/17/2009 7:45 AM

Christmas has always been a time when people get together. We don't do it as much as we once did, but there was a time when Debbie's entire family would come to our house for Christmas dinner. Counting children, husbands, wives, boyfriends and girlfriends, we've had as many as fifty people in our house on Christmas day. To be honest, there were times when I wasn't sure that the floor joists upstairs, or downstairs for that matter, would hold us all up. But they did.

We would set folding tables up in our living room, moving out or, back out of the way the recliner, couch and love seat, to make way for the spread and so that we could all be seated together. Deb would cover those folding tables with a nice, long table cloth and it would look as if we had one long table. Folding chairs accompanied the set up and we would have a feast. It was great times together. And then I wonder why I've gained so much weight over the years!

Many folks get together at Christmas. Some even like getting together so much that they make two and even three stops at in-laws homes, aunt Margret's, and Mom and Dad's. It can wear a body out but frankly it's good that people get together and share.

But, wow! What a clean up after all the company's gone! I suppose it's worth it though because we just never know what another year is going to bring.

Lying in the manger in that little stable under the inn, Jesus had visitors too. First there were the shepherds. They had been tending to the flocks at night out on the hills overlooking the tiny burg of Bethlehem. I suppose it was a quiet night, not unlike many others for these second shift shepherds.

But then something happened. They were visited first. An angel appeared announcing the birth of the Christ the Messiah. This angel didn't make his announcement to the king of Israel but to these humble, common shepherds. Then, the whole heaven was filled with a great angelic choir singing praises to this newborn baby. After they had gone the shepherds immediately left the flocks and went to see this tiny wonder God's gift to the world at Christmas. Hastily they descended the hills and made their way to the stable

where they saw with their own eyes the Christ Child.

Nearly two years later, after Mary and Joseph had moved to a house in the village, they had another visit from the Magi or Wise Men from the east. They had seen a star that was unlike all the others. It was a special star created just for this time. They followed that star all the way to Israel. They made a stop at Jerusalem, because surely such a great event would be known by the king. But that's a story for another time. In short, they were told of the prophecies that Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.

The star reappeared and led them straight to the house where Mary, Joseph, and the infant, Jesus were staying. They brought gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Again, these gifts have their own story for another time.

All these visitors were very important people in the story of Christmas. But I want to submit to you that this Jesus who was visited by all these people also wants to visit you. Perhaps this Christmas finds you feeling gloomy because of the loss of someone special, or maybe it conjures up unpleasant memories for one reason or another. Jesus wants to visit you to comfort you and let you know that you will never be alone.

He also wants to visit those who haven't made a decision to follow Him as of yet. He is visiting you this Christmas to let you know that there really is more to this season than just going in debt for presents, going to parties and getting a few days off from work. He wants to spend some time with you letting you know that your life can be forever changed because He was born, coming into this world to pay the penalty for our sins. He wants to be your personal friend and Savior. Go ahead; answer the door. You've got a visitor this Christmas and it's none other than the King of kings!

Jerry D. Ousley is the Author of four books, "Soul Challenge", "Soul Journey" "Ordeal" and "The Spirit Bread Daily Devotional." Listen to our daily broadcast Spirit Bread. Find out more by visiting www.spiritbread.com or email us at jousley@spiritbread.com

Article Source: <http://www.faithwriters.com-CHRISTIAN WRITERS>

Lessons I learned from my father.

Here we are in Advent once again. I have been remembering one memorable Christmas.

During my law school years I drove to Rome from Syracuse to see my dad on most weekends. He was a widower and living alone, and we enjoyed Sunday dinner together. Christmas in 1979 was on a Friday. I had a final exam on the morning of December 23, so I was trying hard to muster up the Christmas spirit.

My father was known as a last minute shopper – as in 4:30 on Christmas Eve. When my mother was alive, she did the gift shopping for the family, and Dad usually shopped for her at the last possible moment. In 1972 he bought her a vacuum cleaner. It was not his finest moment. Nevertheless, he learned from that blunder and resolved to shop earlier.

When I visited him on December 20, the Sunday before Christmas, Dad asked me what I wanted for Christmas. I told him I wanted a ski cap (blue to go with a new jacket), a whistling tea kettle and Chanel No. 5.

On Tuesday, December 22, I received a call from one of my father's friends and learned that he had been in a serious car accident. He had 9 broken ribs, had lost some teeth, some nasty cuts and abrasions. Rome Hospital was shipping him to University Hospital.

I was studying for an exam when I got the call. I abandoned my books, and headed over to the hospital. My father was in rough shape, but he was not in critical condition. I stayed with him for a while then went back to my books. I pulled an all nighter, and took my exam on the morning of December 23 – completely exhausted.

The doctors released Dad from the hospital on Christmas Eve, and I brought him home. He was recovering, but in a lot of pain. I gave no thought to Christmas presents for myself. I was so grateful to have him home!

Christmas morning arrived. I made breakfast and we turned on the radio for some Christmas carols. "Go get your presents," he told me. I looked under his little tree, and there were three packages waiting for me: a great ski cap, Chanel No. 5, and a whistling tea kettle. I was, and honestly I am still overwhelmed.

The vacuum cleaner episode taught Dad a lesson about gift giving. In fact, he learned several lessons.

He appreciated his dear wife. He had taken for granted her loving and forgiving spirit before.

When her feelings were hurt, he resolved not to let that happen again.

Dad thought about what Mother would like, and he tried to make her happy. He did not wait until the last minute. He sought out ways to show his love.

Dad did not forget those lessons after Mother died. I know that he walked to downtown Rome during the lunch hour on Monday, and found those gifts for me. He did it because he loved me, and wanted to show me that.

This year, let's all learn these lessons.

Let's appreciate each other every day. Say thank you. Smile, and do kind acts for one another.

Put the needs of your loved ones ahead of your own. Make them happy, and you will find that you will also be happy.

Don't put off showing your love. No one promises you tomorrow.

And, lastly. Do not EVER buy your wife a vacuum cleaner for Christmas.

God Bless us – every one!

Peace,
Andrea



"It is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD." *Lamentations 3:26, TNIV*

Good to wait? It's hard to imagine a more counter-cultural message! In our time of Twitter and other instant messaging, fast food, and general impatience, the very idea that waiting can be good is unheard of. But here it is: Advent – a season of waiting.

During Advent, the church confesses the wisdom that Jeremiah spoke so long ago: "It is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD." The church's observance of Advent serves as a quiet, peaceful oasis for people who are harried and hassled and trying to run in every direction at once. The church invites her children and the children of the world to come aside during these days for some spiritual R & R; rest and reflection on God's promises! Rather than fussing and fuming about society's commercialization of Christmas, the church quietly offers another way for us to approach December 25th.

To put this in perspective, the first half of the church year, beginning with Advent (approximately December through June) highlights the life of Christ. The second half (approximately June through November) highlights the teachings of Christ, with Jesus' parables and miracles playing a major role. The Church Year is a "recycling program" that provides us with a sacred sequence of observances and celebrations that assist us in experiencing the fullness of our faith. Every season of the Church Year has a special meaning, distinctive customs, and its own history. The start of this recycling of holy time begins each year on the First Sunday of Advent, a time given for us as Christian people to be spent in remembering, repenting and rejoicing.

That is the church year "in a nutshell," and it reveals how Advent fits into the overall picture of our learning experiences and worship of our God and King.

Advent specifically focuses on Christ's coming; however, His coming among us shows itself clearly in three ways – past, present, and future. The readings that highlight His coming in the past focus on the Old Testament prophecies of His incarnation at Bethlehem. The readings which highlight Christ's coming in the future focus on His Second Coming on the Last Day, at the end of time. Finally, there are the readings that highlight His coming in the present. They focus on Christ's ministry among us through Word and Sacrament today.

Going back to a previous paragraph, we notice that Christians spend Advent "in remembering, repenting and rejoicing." This Church season has always been one of "mixed emotions." In the early church, the focus was more on penitence, whereas today, most people focus more on rejoicing and anticipation. As I've grown and changed in my walk with God, I've learned to really appreciate that older view.

First, consider for a moment a holy, pure, and perfect God...a God who dwells in "unapproachable light" (*1 Tm 6:16*)...a God in whom there is "no darkness at all" (*1 Jn. 1:5*). Now, this holy, pure God is faced with His human creation – sinful, rebellious, disobedient humans who simply cannot and will not live as He intended them to live. Oh, and by the way, they are often dirty and smelly, too, and they come down with all kinds of diseases...and they die and decay. Even their attempts at righteousness come up far short of the mark – "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." (*Is. 64:6*)

As Pastor O'Connor often stated, "It's a good thing that God isn't fair." If He acted fairly, we would all deserve to be rejected by Him and spend eternity apart from Him. But our God isn't like that. Our God is love (*1 Jn. 4:8*), and He expresses that love in a most distinctive way; He acts without our merit and in pure love reconciles us to Him. How? By absolutely humiliating Himself...by becoming one of us...by taking on human form. He "...made Himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." (*Phil. 2:7-8*)

And so in Advent, we await the absolute humiliation of our God. Holy, pure, God of light, becoming a man, earning a living by sweat and hard work – earning our salvation by allowing Himself to be tortured to death by humans, making us right with God, earning for us a place as God's children and friends.

That is why my joy and anticipation is tempered by penitence. Mary's beautiful, innocent baby boy would endure horrible bodily pain, utter shame, and the terror of death. That little baby, the Anointed One of God, would forever fulfill what God foretold in *Leviticus 17*, "...it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul." He humiliated Himself and accomplished that great work for you, for me, "...once for all." (*Heb. 10:10*)

So as we rejoice, we prostrate ourselves before Christ, the God-man, in praise and thanksgiving for His gift, His atoning sacrifice of flesh and blood and His conquest of death and hell forever through His resurrection from the dead.



May we and the whole Church of Christ have a blessed Advent season and...

A Merry (tempered with penitence) Christmas!

– Jim Seybert

LOVE LETTERS OF CHRISTMAS

C—**CHRIST** Jesus has come from heaven.

H—The **HOLY** I am

R—**REJOICE** with the mighty angels

I—an **INFANT** both God and man—oh
love letters of Christmas telling me God
loves everyone and all, love letters of Christmas
telling me God so loved the world

S—A **STAR** moving through the heavens

T—Great **TIDINGS** of joy

M—A **MANGER** that Jesus slept in

A—the **ANGEL** who watched the baby boy, love
letters of Christmas telling me God loves
everyone and All, love letters of Christmas
telling me God so loved the world

S—a **SAVIOR** is sent from heaven

S—Great **SHEPHERD** is He

S—the **SON** of the living God brings Salvation to
you and me, oh, god loves everyone and all,
love letters of Christmas telling me God so loved
the world.



Iraq—Did You Know?

1. The Garden of Eden was in Iraq.
2. Mesopotamia, which is now Iraq, was the cradle of civilization.
3. Noah built the Ark in Iraq.
4. The Tower of Babel was in Iraq.
5. Abraham was from Ur, which is in Southern Iraq.
6. Isaac's wife Rebekah is from Nahor, which is in Iraq.
7. Jacob met Rachel in Iraq.
8. Jonah preached in Nineveh-which is in Iraq.
9. Assyria, which is in Iraq, conquered the ten tribes of Israel.
10. Amos cried out in Iraq.
11. Babylon, which is in Iraq, destroyed Jerusalem.
12. Daniel was in the lion's den in Iraq.
13. The three Hebrew children were in the fire in Iraq.
14. Belshazzar, the King of Babylon saw the "writing on the wall" in Iraq.
15. Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, carried the Jews captive into Iraq.
16. Ezekiel preached in Iraq.
17. The wise men were from Iraq.
18. Peter preached in Iraq.

And you have probably seen this one. Israel is the nation most often mentioned in the Bible. But do you know which nation is second? It is Iraq! However, that is not the name that is used in the Bible. The names used in the Bible are Babylon, Land of Shinar, and Mesopotamia. The word Mesopotamia means between the two rivers, more exactly between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. The name Iraq, means country with deep roots. Indeed Iraq is a country with deep roots and is a very significant country in the Bible. No other nation, except Israel, has more history and prophecy associated with it than Iraq.

Given to Pat Clark by Pastor John O'Connor

Ten Guidelines For Keeping Christ in Christmas

TAKE time to be alone and ponder your relationship
With Christ.

READ the story of Jesus' birth and note how people
Responded—Mary, Joseph, the shepherds,
Simeon and Anna.

PRAISE God at Christmas. Join other Christians
in celebrations of music and praise.

HELP those in need at Christmas. Follow the example
of Jesus whose heart was filled with compassion
for those who were suffering.

KEEP your **TO DO** list as short as possible.
Limit your social obligations so there is
time for reflection.

USE cash when you buy gifts to avoid holiday
debt. Invite your relatives to support a
mission cause instead of giving you a gift.

TELL others about the Savior. Find opportunities
To give a tract or a Bible.

REMEMBER Christ's church around the world.
Some of these churches are enduring great
hardship.

LIVE like Christ in this season. Be compassionate,
Forgiving (especially in mall parking lots and
with harassed sales staff). Be sensitive to the
people with whom you work and play.

BE JOYFUL at Christmas! You are celebrating the
Greatest event in the history of the world—the
Arrival of God in human form.



It's almost Thanksgiving and this time of the year always gets me to thinking about how wonderful it was to be a kid and looking forward to that special day of turkey, pie and a houseful of family. I think often of my Grampa Briggs and how much he enjoyed sitting at the head of the table looking out over his family. Family! Now much of my family is Grace Lutheran Church since all my kids are far away and the grandparents have long ago received their reward in Heaven. Now my thoughts run to that beautiful home on Carter Road.

I still can't get over it! Each time I drive past Carter Rd, I am still amazed. When I pull into our parking lot and see the beautifully manicured acreage, the lovely flowers in our garden beneath the crosses, the beautiful new sign with the flowers beneath, the landscaping along our building, I am so filled with peace. Each time I walk into our beautiful worship facility, I get a thrill. When I open those beautiful wooden doors giving me entrance to our sanctuary, I stand in awe. The beautiful crucifix, the lovely altar, baptism font and lectern, all made especially for us by Harden Furniture from a design by Pastor O'Connor, the marble floor beneath, All the wonderful stained glass and banners.

These are all pieces of the puzzle that makes up Grace Lutheran Church. How can anyone who has been part of this ministry over the years take any of this wonder for granted? It's impossible isn't it? When I think about Pastor O'Connor and his dream, a dream he never doubted. I think back to the days when I wasn't sure his dream was possible, but I should have known that with God's help all is possible!

As we come to the beautiful season of Advent and Christmas, take any and all opportunity to be with your sisters and brothers in Christ, invite family and friends to come and worship. Remember, the most important piece of God's puzzle is His people. We are why He created this wonder, beautiful, sometimes mixed up world. Then to top it off He gave us His Son, Jesus to perfect our salvation. Be part of the heavenly excitement of the coming of our baby Jesus. *Pat Clark*

STEWARDSHIP NEWS



On Stewardship

Throughout Scripture, God exhorts His followers to give generously to those in need and to His Church. Giving is an expression of our faith in, our love for, and our gratitude to the Lord for who He is and all that He has done for us through His Son Jesus. Tithing is the practice of honoring God by faithfully giving one tenth of our incomes to Him. Certainly we can honor and worship

God even if we give less than the tithe as long as we give willingly and cheerfully through faith. The tithe, however, is a meaningful benchmark and a Biblically based guide for our giving—a goal both to attain and surpass. With God's help, we can make a commitment to begin the journey of faith and become tithers and even go beyond the tithe. As our trust and faith in the Lord grow, so will our giving.

Dear Lord, You are the owner of all the animals in the forest and all the cattle on a thousand hills. Grant us faith and wisdom to acknowledge You as the creator, owner, and giver of all things. We pray that You will bless us with faithful and giving hearts so that we may be willing to return to You a portion of what You have already given to us. Help us to open our hearts to the needs of Your Church on earth and to the needs of those around us. In Your precious name we pray. Amen.

Pat Clark, Stewardship Chairman

Advent Worship Schedule

November 29: 1st Sunday in Advent
December 2: * Midweek Advent Service 7:00 PM
December 6: 2nd Sunday in Advent
December 9: *Midweek Advent Service
December 13: 3rd Sunday in Advent
(Sunday School Christmas Program)
December 16: *Midweek Advent Service 7:00 PM
December 20: 4th Sunday in Advent
December 24: Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 7:00 PM

****Covered dish suppers will be held before each Midweek Advent Service beginning at 5:30 PM

COMPARISON CHARTS OF CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM

C-1: JEHOVAH GOD VERSUS ALLAH

THE NATURE OF GOD	CHRISTIANITY: Jehovah	ISLAM: Allah
Does God Change?	God does not change. James 1: 17: <i>Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no varying, neither shadow of turning.</i>	Allah of Islam changes. Surah 2: 106 <i>If We supersede any verse or cause it to be forgotten, We bring a better one or one similar. Do you not know that Allah has power over all things!</i>
Is God Loving?	God loves everyone. John 3: 16: <i>For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...</i>	Allah is tempermental. Surah 32: 13: <i>If we so willed, we could have brought every soul its true guidance, but the word from me will come true: 'I will fill Hell with demons and men all together.'</i>
Is God Deceptive?	God cannot lie. Titus 1: 2 <i>In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;</i>	Allah deceives. Surah 8: 30: <i>They plot and plan, and Allah, too plans, but the best of planners (deceivers) is Allah.</i>
Is God a Trinity	God is Triune. Father is God: John 6:27 Son is God: Col. 2:9 Spirit is God: Acts 5: 3-9	Trinity is blasphemy. Surah 5: 73: <i>They do blaspheme who say God is one of three...for there is no Allah except one Allah.</i>
Who is in the Trinity?	Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Matt. 28:19 <i>Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:</i>	Islam believes the Christian trinity is God the Father, God the Mother (Mary) and God the Son (Jesus). Surah 5: 116: <i>"And behold! God will say: O Jesus the son of Mary didst say unto men, 'worship me and my mother as gods' in derogation of Allah?"</i>

C-2: JESUS OF THE BIBLE VERSUS JESUS OF THE QUR'AN

THE NATURE OF JESUS	CHRISTIANITY: YESHUA	ISLAM: ISA
Is Jesus Created?	Jesus is not created. Colossians 1:17: <i>And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.</i>	Jesus was created. Surah 3: 59: <i>The similitude of Isa before God is as that of Adam; He created him from dust...</i>
Is Jesus Lord or an Apostle?	Jesus is Lord. John 14: 6 <i>Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.</i>	Jesus is just Apostle. Surah 4: 171: <i>O people of the book, commit no excess of your religion: nor say of Allah aught but truth, Christ Isa the son of Mary was an apostle of Allah.</i>
Was Jesus Crucified?	Jesus was Crucified. 1 Corinthians 2: 2: <i>For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.</i>	Jesus was not crucified Surah 4: 157: <i>That they said in boast 'we killed Christ Isa, the son of Mary'...but they killed him not, nor crucified him.</i>

C-3: JESUS VERSUS MUHAMMED

JESUS VERSUS MUHAMMED	JESUS	MUHAMMED
Son of God or Just a Man?	Jesus is Son of God. John 10:36: Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?	Jesus was just a man. Surah 18: 4-5 And it (the Qur'an) warns those who say: 'Allah has taken a son.' Surely, of this they have no knowledge, neither they nor their fathers; it is a monstrous word that comes from their mouths, they say nothing but a lie.
Know the Thoughts of Men?	Jesus knew the thoughts of men. Rev 2: 23: ...and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts...	Muhammed did not know the thoughts of men. Surah 11: 31 I do not say to you that I possess the treasures of Allah, and I do not know the unseen.
Advocate with the Father?	Jesus is our Advocate. 1 John 2:1-2 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.	Muhammed is not our Advocate. Surah 9: 80 (It is the same) whether or not you beg forgiveness for them. If you beg forgiveness for them seventy times Allah will not forgive them, for they have disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger. Allah does not guide the evildoers.
Use of Sword?	Jesus forbade the use of the sword. Matthew 26: 52: Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.	Muhammed urged the use of the sword. Surah 8: 65: O Prophet; urge the believers to fight. If there are twenty patient men among you, you shall overcome two hundred, and if there are a hundred, they shall overcome a thousand unbelievers, for they are a nation who do not understand.
Forgiveness or Revenge?	Jesus taught forgiveness. Matthew 5: 38-39: Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.	Muhammed taught revenge. Surah 2: 194 The sacred month for the sacred month, prohibitions are (subject to) retaliation. If any one aggresses against you, so aggress against him with the likeness of that which he has aggressed against you.
Sinless or Sinful?	Jesus was Sinless. 1 Peter 2: 21-22: For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:	Muhammed was Sinful. Surah 18: 110: Say: 'I am only a human like you, revealed to me is that your God is One God. Let him who hopes for the encounter with his Lord do good work, and not associate anyone with the worship of his Lord.'

C-4: SALVATION IN CHRISTIANITY VS. ISLAM

SALVATION	CHRISTIANITY: GRACE	ISLAM: STRAIGHT PATH
Is Man born with Original Sin?	Man is born with Original Sin. Romans 5:12: <i>Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.</i>	Man has no original sin. Sin by deed only.
Is Jesus the only way to salvation?	Jesus is only way. Phil 2: 10-11 <i>That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.</i>	Jesus was a man, and a worshipper of Allah. Surah 19: 30 <i>He (the baby) said: 'I am the worshiper of Allah. Allah has given me the Book and made me a Prophet.</i>
Is Salvation open to Everyone?	Salvation is offered to all. Romans 10: 13 <i>For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.</i>	Salvation is only in Allah's hands. Surah 2: 284: <i>Allah forgives whom He pleases, and punishes whom He pleases, for Allah has power over all things.</i>
Grace or Works?	Grace alone saves. Ephesians 2: 8-9 <i>For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.</i>	Good works cancel bad deeds. Surah 11: 114: <i>For those things that are good remove those that are evil.</i>
Is there Assurance in Salvation?	There is Eternal Security. John 10: 28 <i>And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.</i>	Jihad is the only eternal security. Surah 3: 157: <i>And if you are slain, or die in the way of Allah, forgiveness and mercy from Allah are far better than all they could amass.</i>
Is Salvation Coerced?	God forces no one to salvation. Revelation 3: 20: <i>Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.</i>	Allah forces worship. Surah 2: 193: <i>Fight against them until there is no dissension, and the religion is for Allah.</i> Surah 9: 29: <i>Fight those who neither believe in Allah nor the Last Day, who do not forbid what Allah and His Messenger have forbidden, and do not embrace the religion of the truth, being among those who have been given the Book (Bible and the Torah), until they pay tribute out of hand and have been humiliated.</i>

Evangelism for December

Are you ready? Ready for what you ask. For 2010 and some evangelism, of course! Please check out the bulletin board to see where you can help out. There are many chances to get involved – even if only once a year.

Have you asked anyone about the wine trip? Find Anne Eldred, or any of the Bahr's or Steve or Teri Devan ask them to tell you all about it. (Lee Della went also but she has now left us for the winter.) The weather was great! That's all the details I'm giving away, so ask one of us!

December is fast approaching. Have you started your baking yet? I have done 4 batches of cookies to date. But my next project is to get ready for our 2nd Annual Cookie Exchange. It's going to take place on Dec. 6 during fellowship time. We'd love to have you take part, also! Here's all you have to do. First, you need to sign-up with your name and phone number. This is to ensure that you will get a call to tell you how many bags of cookies you will need. Then bake like crazy and place ½ dozen cookies in a baggie. Then bring them with you to church on Dec. 6. You will leave a bag of yours and take a bag of some one else's. Also there will be a box for the shut-ins this year. Sounds easy doesn't it? It's a great way to try some sweet treats!

A game night will be held on Friday, January 22 at 7 or Sunday, January 24 at 1 PM. Bring your favorite game or cards. More details will be released, after we get past the holiday rush. It will be a fun time to get out and not worrying about your budget! And you will be increasing your spirit with those who feel the same. Does it get any better than that?

We will be holding an Evangelism meeting on Sunday, Jan.10, after Fellowship Time (about 11:30) to plan future events. Hope you can't wait to hear what we have up our sleeve. I know that the Heart Run and Walk is on March 6. The registrations and fund-raising can all be done on-line which should make it easier for many of you.

Yours in serving him,

Teri Devan

SUNDAY SCHOOL



Sunday school continues on, adjusting to the time change. We currently have 16 children participating in Sunday school, give or take a few each week. Thank you parents and guardians for your dedication during this change.

“Christmas Magic”

Nothing says Christmas more than a Sunday School Christmas musical. We are preparing for the Christmas season with our annual Christmas pageant. This year the children will be presenting, “Christmas Magic”, a Christmas musical. The children look forward each year to performing for the church and they work very hard on their parts and songs. So please mark your calendar for December 13, in lieu of church service that Sunday, we will be presenting our annual Christmas Program. Come enjoy and support the future of Grace.

Each Christmas holiday we give the children a gift from the church. If you would like to donate a gift for each of the children or money to help with this expense, or if you have an idea of something special to give please see me. These gifts will be handed out after the Christmas program on Dec. 13.

Sunday school will be in recess for the holidays following the Christmas Program on December 13 until mid-January. I will be sure to let everyone know when we will begin our mid-winter craft/giving session.

Just a note: Do you save your BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION??? Or CAMPBELLS SOUP LABELS FOR EDUCATION??? I will begin collecting Box Tops and Soup Labels for education. Please take the time to donate these for your local Elementary Schools.

Wishing everyone a peaceful, blessed Christmas this year filled with the miracle in which we all believe.

God's Blessings, Beth Scholl
Director of Christian Education

Islamic Works v. Christian Grace

ISLAM AND SALVATION BY WORKS	CHRIST AND SALVATION BY GRACE
Salvation based on scales. (Surah 17:13-14)	Salvation based on the Cross and grace. (Ephesians 2:8-9)
Salvation based on a lifetime confession of faith in Allah and his messenger Muhammed. (Surah 1:2-4)	Salvation based on a personal confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. (Romans 10:9-13)
God is impersonal; therefore, obedience to the five pillars is most important. (Surah 2:277)	God is personal and incarnate; therefore, relationship with our Heavenly Father is most important. (Isaiah 9:6; John 20:28)
Conditional love based on obedience to Allah. (Surah 60:1)	Unconditional love based on the blood of Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:8)
Heaven is pictured as men sitting on couches being served wine by perpetual virgins. (Surah 4:57)	Heaven is pictured as the worship of Jesus Christ as He rewards men and women for their works after salvation. (Revelation 21; 1 Corinthians 3)
Allah only saves those whom he wants. (Surah 14:4)	God saves all those who will receive Jesus Christ as Savior. (2 Peter 3:9; 1 John 2:2; Luke 19:10)
Sins are overlooked if the good outweighs the bad.	All sins must be punished since they offend a holy God. Therefore, the cross is necessary.
Salvation is never guaranteed (outside of <i>jihad</i> and martyrdom). (Surah 3:157; Hadith 1.35)	Salvation is guaranteed based on Christ's finished work (Luke 23), the Spirit's sealing (Ephesians 1:13), and the Word of God (1 John 5:12-13).
Muhammed himself did not know his eternal destiny. Why follow a man who does not know God's plan for his eternal life? (Hadith 5.266)	Jesus Christ finished the work on the cross. Salvation is not based on man changing himself. Salvation is based on God transforming man from the inside out. (2 Corinthians 5:17).

December

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
		1 6:00 PM-Choir Practice 7:30 PM-Deacon/Elder meeting	2 5:30 PM-Covered dish supper 7:00 PM-Midweek Advent Service	3	4	5
6 8:45 AM-SS/BS 10:00 AM-Worship 11:00 AM-FS	7	8 6:00 PM-Choir Practice 7:30 PM-MMLWML Christmas party	9 5:30 PM-Covered dish supper 7:00 PM-Midweek Advent Service	10	11	12 9:00 AM-Sunday School Christmas Program Rehearsal
13 8:45 AM-SS/BS 10:00 AM-Sunday School Christmas Program 11:00 AM-FS	14	15 6:00 PM-Choir Practice 7:30 PM-Council Meeting	16 5:30 PM-Covered dish supper 7:00 PM-Midweek Advent Service	17	18	19
20 8:45 AM-BS SS in recess 10:00 AM-Worship 11:00 AM-FS	21	22 6:00 PM-Choir Practice	23	24 7:00 PM-Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	25 CHRISTMAS DAY OUR SAVIOR IS BORN! ALLELUIA!	26
27 8:45 AM-BS SS in recess 10:00 AM-Worship 11:00 AM-FS	28	29 6:00 PM-Choir Practice	30	31	WOMAN'S BIBLE STUDY TUESDAY IS IN RECESS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE!	

2009



BRING HIM ON "THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD"

As we prepare for Christmas, preparing our Christmas lists for mom and dad or grandma and grandpa or just your loved one or ones, sometimes we kind of forget the true meaning of this most sacred holiday. Jesus Christ the savior of the world is born! Isn't that the most exciting statement that you have ever heard! But consider this, what if, you never heard about this news or it was kept from you by a government that religion is not an acceptable way of life. What if, you lived in a world without Jesus or without God? What would your life be like? We are one of the luckiest nations in the world that we can practice our religion and worship our Lord whenever it pleases us. It's hard to realize with all the freedoms we have that there are countries and areas of our world that have not heard about the Savior or have heard but are not allowed to worship him. We must spread the Good News to these nations. This season why don't we think of these people and add them to our prayer lists. A life without God is no life at all. This season take some time to think about our Lord, I know it's busy, but make the time. Bring on our Lord and Savior, please bring him on the "Savior of the World".

In His service,

Dave Devan, Elder

We Would Like To Hear From The Pew!

Your input is very important. You do not need to be Pastor or an officer of Grace to submit articles. Please consider submitting something that interests you from time to time. *Rebecca & Pat*

Editor's Notes

Attention: It takes about seven days to put together the newsletter once the articles are in. Then we need about three days for mailing time to reach some who live in other states. Please help us meet our deadline by having your articles to Rebecca Harrington by the 18th of the month. rharr9@twcnny.rt.com

Thank You
Rebecca Harrington

Birthdays

- 1 Jeanne Harmon
- 6 Emilee Gilbert
- 10 Amy McCormick
- 11 Dolores Antl
- 14 Lauren Warren
- 17 Mason Moran
- 18 Dylan Narolis
- 27 Tabitha Minor

Baptismal Birthday's

- 8 Morgan Gualtieri
- 8 Ashley Gualtieri
- 24 Amy McCormick
- 29 Steven Devan

Anniversaries

- 2 James & Jeanne Harmon
- 11 David & Louise Snyder

Come Join Hands With Us!

Grace Lutheran Church

3965 Carter Road
Canastota, NY 13032
(315) 697-2128

Hours of Worship


Sunday 10:00 AM

Holy Communion 1st & 3rd Sundays

Fellowship Hour 11:00 AM

Sunday School & Bible Study 8:45 AM

Women's Bible Study-Tuesday 10:00 AM

A  **JESUS CHRIST**
Now and Forever

If you have articles that you would like to see published please contact Rebecca Harrington with the information. In order to make inclusion easier, please submit an electronic version of the material in Microsoft format.

Newsletter deadline for articles is the 18th of each month.

Elder David Devan	762-4222
Deacon David Snyder	829-5256
Deacon Andrea Dodge	336-4198
Deacon Patricia Clark	762-5654
Director of Christian Education Beth Scholl	762-1403
President Paul House	280-4115
Vice President Charles Flay	829-3962
Treasurer Kathy Pavelock	245-1590
Financial Secretary Dana Smith	697-9450
Secretary Charlene Kirk	339-2180
Evangelism Chairman Teri Devan	734-1372
Stewardship Chairman Pat Clark	762-5654
Property Care Chairman Bob Smith	697-9450
Publicity (PR) Karen Devan	762-4222