



HOLY COMMUNION OFFERED EVERY SUNDAY

Grace Rolls Out a Welcome

by Chris Bush

Grace Lutheran Church Welcomes the Reverend Dr. Kenneth D Scheck II as our new spiritual leader. Pastor Ken, his wife Laura, son Ethan, and daughter Anna, of Masillon, Ohio, they will join our Grace family on December 1st, 2017.

Pastor Ken earned his Master of Divinity in Parish Ministry at Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Bexley, Ohio and his Doctorate of Ministry in Liturgical Studies at St. Mary Seminary in Wickcliffe, Ohio.

Pastor Ken's ministry statement reads, "Called to live out the gospel, I am propelled to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the church, community and world. God has called me to be about the business of sharing Christ's love and grace that is a free gift. This gift is free and cannot be earned. It is a gift and a privilege to serve our Triune God. I respond to God's invitation by serving in the power, love and grace of Jesus Christ."

With the love and warmth of Grace, we embrace Pastor Ken and his family into our family church.



GraceGram

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH



December 2017

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*Deadline for inclusion in the January 2018 GraceGram is **January 17, 2018.***

Send your articles to Victoria Alt at:
parishadmin@grace-hastings.org

Pastor's Office Hours

by Pastor Ken Scheck

During the very first month of Pastor Scheck's ministry, he will not be keeping normal office hours. He will be in the office between 10 AM and Noon Monday through Thursday for his normal schedule. If Pastor Ken is in town, he will be there during the posted hours. If you need to speak with Pastor Ken and he is not in the office, please make an appointment. Victoria, our Administrator, will have his exact schedule and will be able to confirm when he is available. Thank you for your patience during this time of transition.

President's Ponderings

by Chris Bush

It is a new church year – are you ready? The Advent season is about preparing the way of the Lord. The Messiah is coming – prepare to welcome him!

Grace has been preparing for our new pastor and he is here! Welcome to Pastor Ken Scheck! We have been thinking about ways to welcome Pastor Ken and his family to Hastings and to Grace – many people have signed up to have him and his family to dinner or to supply them with a meal. Some may have already sent cards letting the Scheck family know how excited we are to have them as part of the Grace family. As the holiday season finishes at the end of the month and we enter 2018, let's keep that spirit of welcoming going, not only for Pastor Ken, Laura, Ethan, and Anna, but for all people who come through our doors, whether this is the first time they've worshipped with us or it's been some time since we've shared a pew with them.



Children's Church

by Eve Wright

We have 3 Wednesday night Advent services coming up in December. There will be a time of learning for the children, along with crafts. Children's Church leader, Eve Wright, is planning lessons on the Star, Angels and the Nativity.

Wednesday Advent Services

by Kim Domke

ADVENTure..... A Journey of Hope "As we walk in times that are not certain, we know that God is with us guiding and directing our days. This Advent you are invited to come on Wednesday nights to experience an adventure, as we explore some of the ways God has given our ancestors hope. Come join us, as we experience our living God who gives each of us hope on our faith journey," Pastor Ken.

The ADVENTure begins at 6:00pm with dinner (free will offering), special music beginning each Wednesday at 6:50pm. Holden Evening Prayer Service and children's activities begin at 7:00pm

December 6 soup and sandwiches ~ piano and vocal offerings

December 13 lasagna and salad ~ bell choir

December 20 tacos and taco salad ~ flute ensemble



Advent Daily Devotionals and Calendars

by Community Outreach

The Community Outreach Committee has purchased Advent Daily Devotional books for our members to use during for their personal devotions throughout the season of Advent. They will be available on the table in the back of the sanctuary the last Sunday of November. Advent calendars for the children have also been purchased and will be given to Pr. Ken Scheck for distribution to the children on the first Sunday of Advent, Dec. 3rd.



American Red Cross Blood Drive

by Victoria Alt

Grace will be hosting an American Red Cross blood drive on Thursday, December 7th, 2017 from 1:00 pm - 6:45 pm in the Fellowship Hall.

If you are interested in becoming a donor, you can schedule an appointment on-line at redcrossblood.org (sponsor code: Hastings Community) or call 1-800-RED CROSS ([1-800-733-2767](tel:1-800-733-2767))

The Red Cross is also looking for a few volunteers to assist in passing out drinks/snacks or helping at registration/greeting donors. You can volunteer for a single hour or several hours, as you are able. Please contact Victoria in the office to become a volunteer, or sign up on the bulletin board in the Gathering Space.



American Red Cross

Holley Trolley

by Community Outreach

Grace Lutheran Church is once again sponsoring a night for the Hastings Holly Trolley on Saturday, December 9th, from 6:00 – 9:00 pm. A sign-up poster has been posted in the gathering area. We are looking for donations of cookies – please individually wrap them in a Baggie – to hand out to shoppers on the courthouse lawn in downtown Hastings along with a warm cup of hot chocolate. We are also hoping there will be some folks who are willing to provide some holiday cheer by singing Christmas carols and other holiday songs (everyone knows *Jingle Bells*). See the sign-up board for further information.



Adopt-a-Family for Christmas

by Community Outreach

We are planning to assist at least five area families this year with a Christmas dinner food basket and gifts for the children in each family. Specific details are not yet available but further information will be announced in the weekly bulletin and by verbal announcements once all the final details are known. We are planning to deliver food and gifts to the families during the week of Dec. 18th.

Christmas Mitten/Glove/Socks/Shoes Tree

by Community Outreach

We have been informed by area schools that there is not a large need for winter hats but mittens, gloves, and socks are always needed, especially as students sometimes arrive at school or come in from recess with these items soaking wet. Further, Outreach Committee member Kim Domke, who teaches at Southeastern Elementary, mentioned that while most students have boots to wear to school there are some students who do not have a decent pair of shoes to wear during class time. So this year we are adding “shoe tags” indicating shoe sizes, etc. to our tree which members can take to purchase a pair of shoes if they so choose.



by Kim Domke

Both hand bell choirs (19 people) rang in the community on Nov. 16th for the Barry County Kinship Cares' Thanksgiving Dinner. This is a county support group for grandparents raising their grandkids. It was heartwarming to see how the young kids responded to the bells and chimes. We rang and sang Thanksgiving carols and American classics. We also gave previews of Christmas with *Angelic Chorus*, *Ding Dong Merrily on High*, and *Fum, Fum, Fum*. Children were invited up after the concert to ring the hand chimes, and did they ever have a great time! Ask Mike Kemper or Kim Domke about the smiles that melted our hearts.

The next two opportunities to hear & see the bells ring are on Sunday, December 10th at both morning services and then again on Wednesday, December 13th at 6:50pm for preservice music.

Save the date in January...**Winter Bell Workshop will be January 27th** A GREAT time to come learn to ring....talk to Kim about joining the fun of hand bell ringing!

Youth Christmas Program

by Community Outreach

December 17 will be one service at 10:00am. The youth will lead the service with music, Bible verses, hymns, readings, and a drama. Pastor Paul Nuechterlein will preside over the service and distribute communion. A Birthday Party for Jesus celebration will take place immediately following the service.

Christmas Tree ~ Gift Tree

by Community Outreach

The Outreach Committee would like to invite you to add to the festive mood of the youth program day with gifts for “Jesus” ~through loving those young ones who are in need in our community. Suggested items to donate will be on tags on a **Christmas tree in the Gathering Space**. All youth items will be delivered to local children, as requested from Hastings Area Schools and Barry County Christian School. This year needs include socks, underwear, tennis shoes & mittens.

Please select one or two tags and return under / on the tree by **December 17**. No need to wrap.

Christmas Worship schedule

by Community Outreach

The morning of December 24, Christmas Eve, Grace will have a one service at 10:00am

The evening of December 24, worship service will begin at 7:00pm. Please come at 6:30 to enjoy special musical offerings.

There is no service on Christmas Day.



Houston – We have Lift Off!

by Cherie Clements

The 2018 Gathering is on and will be held in Houston June 27th – July 1st, 2018. Our amazing youth, accompanied by some awesome adults, will be there to uplift others after the storms of 2017. Our Grace group will be participating in service learning opportunities throughout the Houston area. Over the coming weeks and months, you will start to hear more from the group as the planning and fundraising begins. As a congregation, we will be stepping up to support them spiritually, emotionally and financially. We are blessed to have this dedicated group.



Lansing Gathering 2017

by Jenn Rosenberger

The Gathering will be taking place from December 27th through December 30th. We will again be going to the Radisson in downtown Lansing. We have confirmed to go Emma and Hope Peck, along with Kassi Warner and Shiann Molet.

We are all excited, I am especially since one of the bands from last year that visited will be the main band this year; and I might say they were awesome!

Thank you for your prayers and support for all of us going. We will be selling ornaments that the youth hand painted after the Children’s Program in December. If the ornaments are ready we may start earlier during the advent season but for sure that day. Please help support our by purchasing a one of a kind ornament this year!



Renovations Update – Closing Out 2017

by Chris Bush

Members of the Renovation Team met in November to plan out several tasks of Phase Two, which focuses on updates to the sanctuary. The “team” is a group of members who have been planning the work that has been accomplished so far, though many Grace members (and non-members) have devoted time to a lot of “grunt” work (and thank you, grunTERS!). The planning involves discussing what is the logical next step of work, determining if it’s work volunteers can do or if it’s smarter to hire it out, getting bids on the work we think is better handled by the pros, deciding on a course of action, and putting the plans into motion.

Here is the work we expect to complete in December and January:

1. The wiring that is hanging down by the entrance to the sanctuary will be taken care of by a licensed electrician and the attic opening closed up by volunteers. Chances are the work will be completed by the time you read this! There may be some drywall hanging to do in that area, so please talk with Mark Bishop if you feel you can help with that.
2. The entryway between the rear of the sanctuary and the new overflow/cry room will be cut out to its final dimensions, a lintel will be installed (it braces the top of the opening), and the sides will be prepared for the new doors that will be installed. Some of this work will be done by a professional masonry person, and the rest will be handled by volunteers. If you want to volunteer to help carry out debris or carry in construction materials, please let Mark Bishop know your availability.
3. A total of six new doors will be ordered: the entryway to the sanctuary (have you seen the black lines on the carpeting?) will have a set of double-doors as well as a single door, the entryway between the sanctuary and the overflow/cry room will be double-doors, and the door between the welcome area and the overflow room will be switched out. When the doors arrive, we’ll frame in the entryway to the sanctuary (the other entryways may be worked on ahead of that time) and get those babies up! We’ll put out the call for volunteers as that time gets closer. I’d tell you more but I want you to be surprised! Can you feel the sanctuary becoming a warm, draft-free, snug place of worship?
4. The north wall (back wall) of the sanctuary will be painted by professionals. (The peak of the roof is too high for us to risk volunteers given the work that’s needed.) The Renovation Team had discussed the option of putting drywall up on that wall (a professional bid was about

\$8000) but we felt that we’d rather wait on that, if drywalling is done at all. Note that there are still opportunities to paint, so let Chris Bush know your interest and we’ll schedule a painting party!

While there are other tasks that may be accomplished in the next couple of months, I want us to focus on the particular jobs at hand and celebrate each completion. January’s GraceGram will have information on the next set of steps. In the meantime, please know that we have not taken on any debt with this work, thanks to the Vision Team fund and the gifts provided toward these efforts. We welcome additional gifts earmarked for “Grace Projects,” so that we can make this place, inside and out, a safe structure and a beacon of God’s welcoming love! That light at the end of the renovation tunnel is getting brighter!



No matter how it’s said ~ Thank you!

by Joe Longcor

Gracias, grazie, je vous remercie, damke, obrigado.

We had at least 35 people volunteer to make the 400 pasties this year. That meant 25 pounds of chopped onions, 150 pounds of potatoes, over 150 pounds of meat, 80 pounds of flour, 3 pounds of suet, and 40 ... yep 40 pounds of lard. And a BIG thank you to the continued support of Thrivent for providing a \$250.00 gift card that helped offset costs. Many thanks to Newton’s Vending for again providing nearly 200 boxes for pasty delivery. Pasty sales raised over \$1600.00.

What a blessing to have such wonderful support. Again there was great fellowship as stories were told, as people caught up with friends, as we remembered our Saints of Pasties past, and much more.

Whether you helped during the event, bought pasties, or kept us in your prayers...you are very appreciated. Over 30 families outside of Grace bought pasties this year as we continue this YUMMY and welcome community outreach work.

Trunk-or-Treat - a huge success!

by Community Outreach

Our **Trunk-or-Treat Event** on Halloween night was wonderfully successful thanks to the great participation from so many of our members at Grace. We greeted 558 adults and children who came through our doors that evening; we had 27 volunteers from Grace who helped, plus many others who donated “treats” to be handed out. We added a drawing for five \$20 *Barry Bucks* certificates which was an extra bit of fun this year. In addition to asking for the usual name, address and phone number on the drawing slips, we also asked if the person(s) had an interest in being contacted concerning any future children or youth activities at Grace Lutheran Church. We had 52 individuals respond “yes”. These names and their contact information will be compiled and passed along to our Children/Youth & Family Committee for use in the future. A great time was had by all and again, thank you to everyone who helped.



Making Magic Happen

by Jenn Rosenberger

Christmas is the season of magic and awe. For me it is a time of slight panic on how we will get everything done and I take a deep breath and repeat the same phrase, “but it is for the children...” Why do I feel this strong pull to make magic happen? Now I also feel the need to make magic happen in my day to day life as well (momming ain’t easy). I have had those mornings where I have so much going on that I zoom out the door and realized I went so fast I forgot to brush my teeth and then I have an up close meeting later; but somehow I have a break with just enough time for me to stop and grab a toothbrush and toothpaste, instead of having to eat the box of emergency altoids in my van. To even smaller moments when I am simply trying to find the right material to use to make fairy wings for the book report diorama and then I turn down the aisle and the perfect iridescent wrapping paper appears.

I feel panic and pressure in those situations but then when something “happens”, when those moments are over and calm has ensued, I have noticed I never thank the One who made those moments “happen”. Those are God moments; He is making the magic happen. I pray to ask for His will or guidance or to say “lead and I will follow”. However, after God Moments that are oh so small but impact my life in a big way do I stop and say thank you?! As I reflect I begin to feel like a spoiled child, my manners have been misplaced. Only being grateful for “big” things isn’t enough is it?!

I went to my Bible for answers:

Philippians 4:6 “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”

Colossians 4:2 “Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.”

James 1:7 “That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.”

1 Thessalonians 5:17 “pray continually,”

I saw this, a great welcoming of prayerful requests but go to God with correct intentions and be thankful. Always being open and continuing to have someone to go to is an amazing gift, knowing we won’t always be granted what we ask for should be expected but also being thankful for what is given to us and recognizing those moments. Not only those things done by God himself but those done by loved ones and strangers a like, simply taking a moment to thank them for their efforts can make a difference in how they feel about service. God isn’t the only one that has to make magic happen, we can do this to, God gave me two hands to do His works and it is time for me to use my hands no matter how big or small they may be.

A Calming Cat

by Eve Wright

We have all seen cats and dogs in church before. You might even ask 'what is their purpose'? This cat's name is Sula. She was found as a kitten and took up residence at the Old Mission Church, built in the 1800's. The gentleman telling the story goes to church every day. Each day he sees the cat crawl up into someone's lap, but not his. One Christmas Eve he was late and had to sit in the very last row of the church, where next to him was a woman with Sula in her lap. The woman didn't want to go to communion and disturb the cat, so the woman placed the cat on her scarf. As folks were coming back down the aisle, the woman explained that Sula just came up to her, so perhaps she was cold. Our writer said the woman had a peace about her. Do you suppose the cat had a sort of divine direction? The man didn't want to believe it, but he had seen this too many times.

A few weeks later, work pressures were really getting our writer down. He was on edge. He looked at his watch and didn't want to go to church, he just had too much to do, he was just tired, but he went anyway. During the entire service the man was on edge, when suddenly Sula appeared at his feet and crawled up into his lap. Immediately his stress left him, a feeling of calm came over him, and he knew that he and cat were both there for a reason.

How many times have we entered the Lord's House and felt this same calm come over us?



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

December Birthdays

12-1	Traci Wales, Myrina Clements Ed Markwart
12-6	Michael Anton, Sandra Mosteller
12-7	Charlotte Anton
12-9	Jana Bishop
12-11	Elnora Beckwith, Dave Neeb
12-13	Carolyn O'Connor
12-20	Jeanette Kogge, Cheri Clements Bill Freedlund
12-21	Vivian Allarding
12-22	Grace Leahann Pearl Ulrich Corrina Palmer
12-25	Nikioma Palmer
12-26	Ilene Hilson
12-28	Karen Halstead, Gary Golnek
12-29	Margaret Wood
12-31	Deborah Wilke

December Anniversaries

12-04	Derrick & Jennifer Rosenberger
12-16	George & Phyllis Lietz
12-20	Bob & Sharon Bolton
12-28	Fred & Jeanette Kogge

Our Prayers for

Healthy pregnancy – Katie Haddix,
Myrina Clements, Joanna Cremeans

Nursing home residents – Dorothy Mayo,
Deb Wood, Vivian Allarding

Shut-ins – Dave Bolton, Ilene Hilson,
Jamie Coplin, Opal Gillons, Shirley
Smith

Grace Lutheran Church

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www.grace-hastings.org

Facebook:
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Our Ministers:

Cindy Olson, *Minister of Music*

Worship Committee:
gracelutheranworshipcommittee@gmail.com

Our Staff:

Victoria Alt, *Parish Administrator*
Mon – Thurs 8 AM - 3PM
ParishAdmin@grace-hastings.org

Kim Domke, *Bell Choir Director*

Nathan Freedlund, *Custodian*

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

1st Sunday after Labor Day - May
Sundays @ 8:00 & 10:45 a.m.

5th Sundays
@ 10:00am

Children's Church

1st Sunday after Labor Day – May
@ 10:45 AM

5th Sundays
@ 10:00 am



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

Executive Committee:

President: *Chris Bush*

Vice President: *Margaret Wood*

Secretary: *Kate Watson*

Treasurer: *Randy Teegardin*

Church Council Members/Liasons

Derrick Rosenberger – Small Group Ministry

Sheryl Gorden – Congregational Care

Phil Poholski – Property Committee

Gary Golnek – Community Outreach

Diane Neeb – Social Activities

Dave Neeb – Stewardship

Gwen Hansen – Children/Youth Ministry

Jan Schreiner – Worship Committee