

Grace United Methodist Church
601 N. 4th St. Pekin, IL. 61554



GRACE NOTES

Volume 49, Issue 12

December 13, 2011



January 28,
2012

11 AM-
12:30 PM

Menu: Chicken and
Noodles, veges, dessert.
drink.

Menu subject to change.

Food pantry will be
open January 12, 2012

Grace food pantry is
asking for donations of
canned meals(ravioli,
spaghetios, etc.) We
thank you for your
continued support.

Inside this issue:

Prayer Concerns

Holy Habits

Birthdays/calendar

UWM News



Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year!
From the staff at Grace
UMC.

Gary

Stacy

Jeff

Jeanie

Sean

Yvonne



Pastor's Note

The Annunciation

(Please take a few moments to read Luke 1:26-55)

Pastor John Buchanan, shared some thoughts that struck a chord with me about the Annunciation, he writes: "Protestants aren't sure what to think about Mary. Our Roman Catholic friends call her Queen of Heaven, Mother of God, whose virginity was perpetual and whose own conception was "*immaculate*." Protestants simply unpack her from the Christmas box, place her in the stable beside the manger for a few weeks, and then wrap her up and repack her and ignore her until next year."

Happily we are rediscovering Mary and reclaiming her centrality to the Christian story. A young woman in a man's world; a young woman, unmarried and pregnant, in a world that held her guilty and could impose a death sentence by stoning for violating her engagement vows to Joseph; a poor, young, unmarried, pregnant woman.

Yet, God is right there in the middle of the mess: the mess of a long journey when you are nine months' pregnant, the mess of no place to stay for the night, the mess of giving birth in a stable, the mess of a census, the mess of a political situation so fragile that any hint of a threat to the current authorities and power brokers was seen as a warrant to kill all the babies just in case, which is what King Herod did when he heard about the birth in Bethlehem.

The central character is the one who conceived, carried, and bore him, Mary of Nazareth. The Gospels of Luke and Matthew introduce her very differently. The favorite is Luke's story. Gabriel, an angel of the Lord, appears to a young woman who is engaged to a man by the name of Joseph and tells her she will bear a child, but it's not Joseph's exactly, because they are not yet married. "Do not be afraid," the angel tells Mary, which, of course, she is. It is a great moment, and artists have created incredibly rich and beautiful paintings of it. The Italian Renaissance artists were fascinated by the annunciation and painted it in gorgeous pastels: Mary is demure, holding a flower or reading a book, the angel's wings shimmering, gold, red, and blue.

Another author Frederick Buechner provides his insightful characterization of the Annunciation:

She struck the angel as hardly old enough to have a child at all, let alone this child. He told her what the child was to be named and who he was to be and something about the mystery that was to come upon her. "You mustn't be afraid, Mary," he said. As he said it, he only hoped she wouldn't notice that beneath the great, golden wings he himself was trembling with fear to think that the whole future of creation hung now on the answer of a girl. (From "Gabriel," Peculiar Treasures)

Mary apparently has a decision to make, and she makes it. "*Here I am, the servant of the Lord: let it be to me according to your word.*" That's who God chose to bear God's Son: to nurse him and nurture him and raise him and love the Son of God.

Christmas Blessings!

Gary+

From The Director's Chair

Grace Notes article December 13th

Over the past couple of months you may have noticed a page in your Grace Notes detailing CORE Groups. They are an exciting new opportunity for our congregation here at Grace UMC. Small groups are a vital part to any church's growth, both spiritually and numerically. I would love to see Grace make a commitment to meeting in small groups the last Sunday of the month through January 2012-October 2012. They will meet from 6-7:30 and will involve three key events each month: Bible Study, Fellowship, and Outreach.

My vision is for these groups to bring families and church members together of different generations. I see the group sharing the responsibilities of leading, food and planning the evening. The Bible Study materials will be provided for the group.

I am looking for those who would be willing to host a group in their home. Please contact me here at the church if you would be willing. I believe these small groups can bring our church together in a powerful way.

We currently have four families who are willing to be hosts. Thank you so much! Now we just need to get families assigned to their groups. Over the next few weeks, make sure and let me know if you are interested in participating.

This coming year will present us with many new opportunities to grow and enhance our spiritual ministries here at Grace Church. I am currently reading a book called Move. It was written by pastors from Willow Creek in Chicago and it is presenting some very interesting challenges to me personally as I look at the ministries here. I pray that this Christmas season can be one of renewal for all of us as we remember that God sent his only son to earth so that we might call him Savior.



Sean



Grace United Methodist Women



Calendar of Events "Walk With Wholeness".

- Jan. 5, 1:00 pm** Exec. Committee meeting
- Jan. 13, 1:15 pm** Church Women United
- Jan. 18, 12:00** Miriam Circle
- January 20** Registration due for Spiritual Retreat
- Jan. 26 :** Circle Day
- Feb. 12** Miriam Bake Sale
- Feb. 24 & 25:** Spiritual Retreat, Springfield

Spiritual Growth Retreat

"THE BEAUTY AND THE BEAST WITHIN" By Barbara Wooldridge

Friday, February 24, 6:30 pm through Saturday, February 25 at 3:00 p.m.
Cost: overnight \$ 65.00 includes room breakfast, lunch, and materials. Commuters Cost \$20.00.

For registration form or more information, call Connie Disney 347-4416. Registration with check due to Connie by January 20 or send directly by January 23, 2012



Circle Meetings

Lydia: Thursday, January 26, at the home of Barbara Berardi. Join us for a New Year of crafts.

Miriam: Wednesday, January 18. 12:00 pm at Our Inn Place. 1:00 pm at CB Smith School.

Rachel/ Sarah: Thursday, January 26, 11:30 am Lunch at our Inn Place

Susannah: Thursday, January 26, 9:00 AM . Fellowship Hall.

Circle Chairpersons please call (346-1298) or e-mail (cdjack@grics.net) Carolyn Jackson with any information for your circles or the

Our next General meeting will be February 9th at 12:00 noon with a prepared meal and a program titled "Wholeness of Love".

Reading Program –

UMW READING PROGRAM



Willowdean Stone would like to know how many books you read even if you didn't meet the goal of four books.

2012 will be a good year for you to begin to learn about missions by joining the UMW Reading Program.

Church Women United
January 13, 2012
1:15 pm St. Paul's
Annual Business Meeting

To add news to the UMW page: 1) bring news to the Executive Committee Meeting on the First Thursday of the month; 2) e-mail news to cdjack@grics.net; or take to any UMW officer, 3) phone Carolyn –346-1298
How about a digital picture??

Grace United Methodist Women
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A tip for you

To remove gum that is stuck to your hair, try using creamy peanut butter, face cream or anything oily.



Thanks to Dave Kelley for bazaar pictures.

TASTE OF GRACE

The success of the Taste of Grace Bazaar was reported at the December Tea. Thanks to all of you who contributed, bought, or helped, we cleared over \$4600. This money along with the pledges will be distributed for Mission projects during 2012.



- 2012 UMW OFFICERS**
- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| President | Pat Moser |
| Vice- President | Marjie Haning |
| Honorary Vice- President | Claire Ford |
| Secretary | Barbara Hill |
| Treasurer | Carolyn Jackson |
| Mission Coordinators: | |
| Spiritual Growth | Connie Disney |
| Social Action | Margaret Kelly |
| Membership, Nurture
and Outreach | Sharon Gerriets |
| Education and
Interpretation | Barbara Berardi |
| Committee Chairmen: | |
| Program Resources | Willowdean Stone |
| Public Relations | Evelyn DeLong |
| Special Missions | Barbara Faichney |
| Sunshine | Bev Harrison |
| Hostesses | Pat Pearson |
| Church Women United | Marilyn Brower |
| Memorials | Jane Schermerhorn |
| Wilkenson | |
| Service | Shirley |
| Kendall/Harriet Canopy | |
| Nominating Committee | 2012 Judy Icenogle |
| | 2013 _____ |
| | 2014 _____ |

Committee Meeting on the First Thursday of the month; 2) e-mail news to @346-1298. How about a digital picture??

2012 Altar Flower Chart

The 2012 Altar Flower chart is available. Altar flowers can be given in memory or honor of a special person or occasion.

Sign your name under the week you would like to donate flowers. Please only one giver per Sunday.

The altar flower chairperson will contact you before your Sunday to see what you would like printed in the bulletin.

Cost is \$25.00– Checks should be made payable to “Grace UMC” with Altar flowers noted on memo line.

If you have any questions feel free to call the church office @347-7131.



Merry Christmas

Pekin Township will be serving a ham dinner to anyone who may need a meal.

December 24, 2011: 11 AM to 1 PM

Pekin Township Community room

420 Elizabeth St.

They will also do home delivery to shut-ins and handicapped only.

If you know of anyone who may need a meal, please tell them about the Christmas dinner.

For home delivery contact Leo Berardi, Pekin Township Supervisor, at 346-3194

HOLY HABITS: Intentional Spiritual Development

Listed below are the next five weeks of scripture selections for your daily consideration in our Holy Habits intentional spiritual development. We are working on the “Attributes of God”. Remember, you only need to spend about 7 minutes each day Monday through Saturday reading praying and contemplating the daily reading. On Sunday (or Saturday evening) make it your habit to attend worship.

December 26-31: “God is Faithful”

Deuteronomy 7:9 Psalm 119:90 Lamentations 3:21-24
II Timothy 2:13 Psalm 33:4 Psalm 145:13

January 2-7: “God is Faithful”

I Corinthians 10:13 I John 1:9 Psalm 89:8
Psalm 146:5-8 II Timothy 1:12 Revelation 19:11

January 9-14: “God is Holy”

Exodus 15:11 Psalm 99 Isaiah 57:15-16
I Peter 1:15-16 I Samuel 2:2 Psalm 111:9

January 16-21: “God is Holy”

Luke 1:49 Revelation 4:8 Psalm 77:13
Isaiah 5:16 Acts 3:13-15 Revelation 15:4

January 23-28: “God is Just”

Deuteronomy 32:4 Psalm 89:14-16 Isaiah 30:18
Romans 3:25-26 II Chronicles 19:7 Psalm 119:137-138





HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Sunday, December 18th

Fourth Sunday of Advent

8:15 & 10:45 AM-Sanctuary Choir Cantata

6:00 PM: "Blue Christmas"

Saturday, December 24th

No regular Chapel

4:30 PM: Family Worship

11:00 PM: Worship w/Communion

Sunday, December 25th

Christmas Day

10:00 AM: One Worship Service

No Nursery Childcare/No Sunday School

Office will be closed December 26th thru January 2nd.

Food Pantry will be open December 15th from 4-5:30pm

Grace Café will be held on Saturday, December 31st from 11am-12:30 pm.

To My Dear Church Family,

Little did I know some 40 years ago when Joe and I married and moved to Pekin that Grace would become my church home and you my church family. But God knew! As He says in Jeremiah, "I know the plans I have for you.."

I am so very thankful for all of you. Through my connections with you and many that have gone on and met Him face to face, I have discovered hidden gifts and talents I could bring to my church family.

Through your support, encouragement, and prayers I have grown as His disciple. Your faithful nurturing continued what my darling mother and devoted Sunday School teachers started many years ago.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve Him at Grace and to work with all of you , especially the children.

My appreciation for all of you goes further. You've been there for me during the difficult and sometimes painful moments. You've been there for the happy and quiet moments. Praise God for you!

What a joy it has been to serve our Lord and Savior with you!

A friend in Jesus,

Jeanie

FRIENDSHIP CLUB



The Friendship Club welcomes all to come and break bread with us at noon on the first Monday of each month.

Our next meeting will be at noon on Monday, January 2, 2012 in Fellowship Hall for a meal prepared by Roy Johnson and Eileen Barbour. You only need to bring yourself and some friends and enjoy the food and fellowship. The program is a photo show of flowers in the Netherlands plus other travel pictures from the October trip to Europe by Margarete & Jack Hall. We invite you and your friends to come for great fellowship and an excellent meal and program.

If you would like a ride, please call the church office at 347-7131 or Ron Trimble 346-6361.



Please keep the following Grace members and friends in your prayers: Fred Gustoff, Margaret Hill.

Sympathy The Grace family extends their deepest sympathy to Jeanie (Joe) Farris on the loss of Jeanie's mother, Bessie Robins who died on December 5th. Our thoughts and prayers are with Jeanie and Joe during their time of sorrow.

Thanks

Thanks to my Grace Church family for all the kindness shown to me following my recent shoulder surgery.

~Norma Caringello

Thank you to everyone for all the assistance these past weeks; from helping me with my coat to making sure I was picked up for activities. I am so grateful to my church family for all of their support.

~Evelyn DeLong

VITAL STATS

~~ *Were You There?* ~~

December 3/4	278
December 10/11	357

~~ *When You Share* ~

Rev. Peter J. Gomes served as the Chaplain at the Harvard University Chapel. During that time he wrote a series of sermons titled: Biblical Wisdom for Daily Living. One text that addressed the discipline of Christian stewardship came from Exodus 16: 9-21, 35...the time of Israel's sojourn in the wilderness.

As we end one year and begin a new one, this admonition from Dr. Gomes seems a fitting consideration of our stewardship at Grace UMC.

"You are asked in the time that you have to use wisely what you have been given for the kingdom of God. That means that you must consider not only how you spend your time but how you spend your money, and how you use your talent as well.

The gifts that you have do not belong to you; they are not yours to possess but rather they are yours to improve. . . If you give serious consideration to this use of your talent, your time, and your treasure, then neither your church nor the whole church of Jesus Christ need ever fear, and for that let the whole church say Amen."

