

Grace to You

December 2010 &
January 2011
Volume 2010, Issue 11

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*The Grinch hated Christmas — the whole Christmas season.
Oh, please don't ask why, no one quite knows the reason. . .
But I think that the best reason of all
May have been that his heart was two sizes too small.*

I have been known in the name of Advent-en righteousness to bemoan the early onset of “The Christmas Season” that has become so common to in our culture. While never verging on the Grinch’s approach to all of this (It’s just not in my makeup to want to rob people of gifts or to dampen their joy!) my liturgical hackles do come up when I hear Christmas carols flowing through store speakers before we’ve even made it to Thanksgiving. It seems like the pumpkins come down and the tinsel goes up and before we’ve even gotten to fully appreciate the Saints, we’re “God resting merry gentlemen” at every turn! And so every year at this time I’m left wondering: What’s a liturgical gal to do?

My approach this time around? Surrender. In a good way, of course. I’m giving up the fight for the sake of a larger cause, and I think it’s a good thing. I’ve decided that there really are worse things than people buying gifts for other people, even if they start thinking about those other people as crazy early as November. There really are worse injustices than decorated trees at the entrances to practically every store I visit. And there are truly more important ways to channel my Advent-en righteousness than waving my fist at the speakers at the mall. Somehow, these realizations are giving me perspective. And perhaps (only time will tell,) they will guide me into some faithful ownership of how I approach these pre-Christmas days.

So my intention this season is to be intentional about the season, not simply reactive to the whirlwind around me. We are preparing to receive the greatest gift ever given the world, because God so loved the world. We are preparing to acknowledge Christ’s presence among us with us, and for us, Emmanuel.

And so my work this season is not un-like that of the Grinch, even though I credit myself with a slightly different starting place than he had. My Advent work is a heart adjustment, to grow it in ways that are able to receive the Christ as he comes. As corny as it sounds I’m going to try to keep hold of the true meaning of Christmas -- which if Cindy Lou Who managed to accomplish, so can I. My Advent intention is to love the world too.

*And what happened then...? Well...in Who-ville they say
That the Grinch's small heart grew three sizes that day!
And then the true meaning of Christmas came through,
And the Grinch found the strength of ten Grinches... plus two.*

May the same happen here in Holland-ville. Take heart this Advent season. Be strong. Do love.

Jen

Sunday Forums

9:15AM in the Forum Room

December

5th & 12th Sacred Dance

One theological dimension of Advent is our movement toward a celebration of incarnation, God made manifest in Christ. Members of the Sacred Dance group at Hope College (some of whom are members at Grace) will share with us their experience of prayer and response to stories of Scripture through physical movement. (For those who might be a little nervous about this: there will be no pressure to actually dance, simply an invitation to enjoy and to consider the physical nature of faith. ☺)

19th Wrap With Us!

For Christmas, Grace “adopts” the two families living in our Grace homes. During the season of Advent we gather gifts based on the wish lists we’ve received from these families and on 4th Advent we wrap the gifts for delivery on the 24th. Be a part of Christmas for these nine wonderful people!

26th No Forum

January

2nd No Forum

9th Epiphany Intergenerational

Be a wise man or woman, boy, girl or youth and join us for this seasonal intergenerational project, Epiphany as a celebration of “Christ for the world!”

16th -23rd Witness: How to tell someone about your faith and feel comfortable doing it

A follow-up to the November 21 program, back-to-back sessions putting into practice ideas explored then. (Open to all--not just those who attended in November. For further information see Clara Brower, Bruce Fries, Cathy Fries, or Chuck Huttar.)

30th -Feb 6th The Proposed Anglican Covenant: A Good Thing?

The process of the creation of an Anglican Covenant began with the Windsor Report, presented to the Primates of the Anglican Communion at their October 2004 meeting. The report was the product of the Lambeth Commission on Communion, appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and charged to address how Anglicans might maintain “the highest degree of communion.” The Covenant is the proposed next step in responding to these questions and every Province in the Communion will make a decision about whether to “sign on” or not. Responses vary from “Yes” to “Maybe” to “No way, that’s NOT Anglican.” Come consider this significant moment in Anglican life as we ask ourselves how or whether to maintain this worldwide communion.

A Program of Advent Awareness

As we approach and experience the liturgical season of Advent, Grace will set aside time to be awake to the season and aware of its themes. Through lectionary texts, memories, song, poetry and art we will find ways to respond to our God, incarnate in Christ who engages us now and into the future. We will begin this series on two Sunday evenings and then shift to Wednesdays on December 1st.



Sunday, Nov 21, 6:00-7:30pm

Sunday, Nov 28, 6:00-7:30pm

Wednesday, Dec 1, 5:30-8:00

Wednesday, Dec 8, 7:00-8:00

Wednesday, Dec 15 7:00-8:30

Wednesday, Dec 22, 7:00-8:30

Looking Toward Advent: Live in Expectation

A Dream of Peace

Jakob the Liar (Snacks at 5:30/Movie, Pizza at 6)

Name the Child Emmanuel

The Light Shines in the Night

Welcoming the Child

Wednesday Noon Brown-Bag Bible Study studies Mark's gospel

We gather every Wednesday (unless notified) from 12:00 to 1:00 pm in the Forum Room to study the Gospel of Mark and will continue until we get through the Gospel. I will be giving both a Christian and a Jewish perspective on the text, relying upon scholars from both traditions.

You do not have to attend every class, come when you can. Bring a sack lunch if you wish. Hope to see you there.

Henry Idema

First Wednesday Movie Nights continue

Join us for snacks at 5:30 and movie with pizza at 6:00. Please bring \$5 for pizza.

January 5, 2011— *When Harry Met Sally*

February 2 —*To Kill a Mockingbird*

March 2 —*The Answer Man*

Activities for Children and Youth Centered around The Church Season

By Debbie Coyle

The coming Advent season brings with it a number of activities for our Children and Youth (of all ages) designed to pull them in to the spirit of the season.

The “Star Tree” project is set to begin on December 5th. Middle School and High School Youth will hold a dinner and talent show to raise funds for their "Community Housing Partnership Family Christmas" project. Sign up to present your "talent"

at the show or come for the entertainment and dinner. Look for the tree set up in the Commons, loaded with stars. On each star is an item needed by (or wished for) by our two Community Housing Partnership families. It's a really easy way to support a family in need this holiday season. Take a star (or two) off the tree, purchase the item on the star, and bring it back (unwrapped) to Grace with the star taped to the item. There will be a great “gift wrapping” day on Sunday, December 19th. Money raised at this event will go toward stars that remain on the tree and for holiday meals for the families.

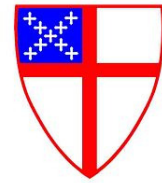


The youth will also be serving the Grace community this Advent by providing an “Evening Out for Parents of Preschoolers”. All Grace families are invited to bring their little ones to Grace December 12th from 4-7pm. The Middle School and High School youth are planning activities, an art craft, story time, and dinner for their young friends. This is a great time for parents to run those holiday errands, or have some much needed time. Contact the church office or sign up in the Commons for more information.

Join the Children and Youth at the Children’s Service on Christmas Eve. The service begins at 6:00 and will feature the Children and Youth as part of the service.

Don’t miss these great opportunities for Children and Youth this Advent and Christmas season.

Via Media Series on “Values”
Wednesday Evening Program
January 12 – 26, February 9-23
Forum Room, 7:00pm



Via Media is video enhanced curricula designed to proclaim the Good News of God in Christ Jesus and to present the Episcopal Church in a contemporary context. This series on Values is based on the questions contained in our Baptismal Covenant. The format of the series is a DVD presentation of conversations by theologians, priests and lay people in the Episcopal Church followed by facilitated group discussion on the themes and questions raised. All are welcome. Join us.

Jan 12: Communion: An Ethical Choice

Jan 19: Repentance: An Ethical Journey

Jan 26: Witness: An Ethical Example

Feb 2: Movie Night (5:30 pm Snacks – 6:00 Movie)

To Kill a Mockingbird

Feb 9: Service: An Ethical Imperative

Feb 16: Respect: An Ethical Right

Feb: 23 Go Forth! Ethics in Action

St. Mary’s Guild

St. Mary's will meet on Monday, December 13, at 7:15 in the Forum Room. This is our annual “craft night” and we will get our gifts ready for our friends who are visited by St. Martha’s Guild.

Hostesses are Brenda Millett and Dianne Hoyt. Craft coordinators are Nancy Hensley and Gerry Cawthra.

Mark your calendars and join us!!

Thank you to our wonderful coffee hour hosts for November!

Kevin & Mary Matrosic
Lynn & Dave Stubbs
Brian & Debbie Coyle



- from Laurie VanArk, Coffee Hour Coordinator

Community Kitchen Helpers Needed:

Every weekday and on Sundays too, the Community Kitchen serves lunch to about 200 hungry people out of the commons area at Western Seminary. Grace Church is committed to providing **three or four helpers each Wednesday. Volunteers** are needed to help serve and clean up from **11:15am to 1:30pm** every Wednesday. Please sign up in the Commons and let us know if you are available to be “on-call”.

Faces of Grace — Erma Bruggink

By Christi Broersma

Erma Bruggink has many passions in her life, and many have been translated into who she is here at Grace. Besides being a wife and mother to two sons she worked in various churches around the area over her years in Holland.



Erma was born and raised in Denver, Colorado, and after graduating high school in Denver she continued her education at Central College in Pella, Iowa. While there she met and dated Don Bruggink who she later married. After they graduated from Central Don went on to Western Theological Seminary. After graduation he first was a pastor of the Fordham Manor Reformed Church, Bronx, New York, from 1957-1962 and in '62 he joined the faculty of Western Seminary.

Erma had quite a few experiences with the Episcopal Church over the years, but her first real taste of the church was when her family spent Don's sabbatical year in Rome from 1970 to 1971. While looking for a church home they came upon St. Paul's Episcopal Within the Walls Church (the first non-Roman Catholic church built within the walls of Rome) and decided to attend there for the time they remained in Rome.

Erma's first job in the area was at the Port Sheldon Presbyterian Church where she was program coordinator from 1983-85. In '85 she took a position with First Presbyterian Church of Grand Haven where she became the director of Christian Education from 1985 through 1990. Her next and last job before retiring was at Community Church of Douglas as director of children's education from 1990 through 1997.

In 1983 Erma and Don lost one of their sons and she called Tina Velthuisen, a former student of Don's at the seminary who was at Grace to see if they could borrow a pall for his casket, which Tina willingly offered to the family. Erma didn't actually visit Grace until she was invited to the baptism of her 4-year-old goddaughter, but she "really" didn't visit until 1997 for the early morning Easter Vigil. That year the advertisements in the newspaper were the final enticement to actually attend a service here.

Since joining Grace she has been involved in many of our ministries. From being a part of the Stephen's ministry team, to a being a member of the choir, St. Mary's, the Pastoral Care Commission, and also a visitor for St. Martha's, she has kept involved with both the events and the people. Erma's care for others and her enthusiasm for service are a huge part of who she is here at Grace Episcopal Church.

Nominations are open for the Vestry Class of 2013

The Vestry Nominating Committee is now accepting nominations for Vestry membership (three year term to begin following the Annual Meeting on Jan 23rd.). You are encouraged to consider who might be called to serve the parish as a lay leader in this capacity. To nominate a fellow parishioner, please take the following steps: Talk with the person you wish to nominate. Obtain permission to submit his or her name to the Nominating Committee; and give a member of the Nominating Committee or the Rector the individual's name.

Each nominee then will be contacted personally by a member of the Nominating Committee, offering the nominee an opportunity to learn about current Vestry focus areas, become aware of the time commitment, and ask any questions. If the Nominee's decision is to move forward, his or her name will be placed in nomination during the Annual Meeting at which four new Vestry members will be elected.

Nominations close on Sunday, January 2, 2011, three weeks prior to the Annual Meeting as required by our by-laws. You are urged to submit your nominations as soon as possible so that we may have sufficient time to meet with each nominee.

The following parishioners make up the Nominating Committee:

Clara Brower	616-688-7356	
Jay Bylsma	399-5721	jbylsma@JayBylsma.com
Chuck Murray	335-3690	crm217eagle@gmail.com
Carol Rickey	396-3734	crickey109@att.net

From Stewardship:

Grace, Gratitude, Generosity: Annual Pledge Drive Results to Date

Overall we are at 67.6% of our goal of \$320,000. We already have gotten 10 new pledges and have signed up an additional 5 Electronic Fund Transfers. Below is a summary of our results.

	Goal	Actual
Total Needed	\$320,000	216,254
New Pledges	20	10
New Electronic Fund Transfer	10	5
Total Pledging Units	145	87

If you have already pledged. **Thank you.** If you haven't, and need a pledge card or EFT form, they can be found in the church office or at the end of the pews. We would like to have all pledge cards in by 2nd week of December so that we can finalize the 2011 Budget.

Guy Packard

Monthly Financial Stewardship Update - Total Gifts

October Budget	\$24,925	Year-to-Date Budget	\$277,894
October Received	\$29,865	Year-to-Date Received	\$269,362
Oct Surplus (Shortage)	\$ 4,940	YTD Surplus (Shortage)	(\$ 8,532)

Commission Night at Grace – Join us!

December 6

In an effort to encourage participation and enable more connections between working groups at Grace, commissions have been trying a new meeting model for the Fall. For the months of October, November and December, all commissions (except Worship) will meet on the first Monday of the month. We'll share supper, break out for commissions, and come back together for dessert and announcements. This is a wonderful time to jump in and join a commission! We need more people involved in the work and planning that sustain the ministries of our parish. So, come be with us on November 1st, explore what different commissions are doing and find your place in the planning! Childcare provided.

6:00-6:30 Supper

6:30-7:30 Commission Meetings

Holland is Ready Movie Nights at the Park



Holland is Ready is hosting movie nights at the Park Theater along the themes of LGBT issues and inclusion. The next movie is *8: The Mormon Proposition* on December 3rd. Movies begin at 7:30pm. Admission is free. All are welcome.

Notes From Fellowship:

Upcoming Events:

Holiday Cookie Exchange and Bake Sale - Thanks to a great turn out last year, we will again be doing the cookie exchange on Sunday, December 5th after the second service. An exchange is where you bring in the number of cookies that you want to trade for, i.e. bring 1 dozen and choose 1 dozen to take home, bring 2 dozen and take 2 dozen. This year we are asking those who bake to also donate an extra ½ to 1 dozen cookies to the bake sale side. There are members who don't bake or have time and have expressed a desire to buy cookies last year.

New Year's Eve Get Together - Fellowship will be hosting a New Year's Eve get together from 5:30 pm until 10 pm, with dinner at 6 pm in the Adult Forum Room. The signup sheet will be in the Commons **until Sunday, December 26th**. Please plan to bring a dish to share: main dish or salad, a beverage of your choice & any left over Christmas goodies! Also bring your child's favorite movie or game & your favorite game and/or a deck of cards. Please contact Sue Cloutier at 396-3034 for more information.

From Sue Cloutier, Fellowship Commission

Bits n' Pieces

Bits and Pieces is a reflection of what is happening at Grace. It's information and fun tidbits that we all share with each other over coffee, tea, and of course pizza in the commons after church and in our daily lives around town. In order to share these bits with the larger church family, we need you to pass it on to *Grace to You*.

Please take the time to share your good news, and those bits and pieces of life by calling either Chris Broersma (616-399-5701) or passing it on in written form to Gail in the office. We are a church who cares about celebrating what we do, earn, and enjoy in life. Trips, degrees, and new babies are some of the news that is important and we'd love you to share it so your news can become a part of Bits n' Pieces in the monthly newsletter. We hope to hear from you soon!

Chris Broersma

Pat and Dick Danly plan to live on their boat Gypsea, a 46 footer this winter, spring, and a part of the summer as they travel from the Mississippi across the Gulf of Mexico, up the Atlantic Coast to New York and then back to Holland by way of the inland waterways. Bon Voyage and safe travels!

Two former members and choir directors at Grace (in their college years) will have major roles in a service at the Episcopal cathedral in Detroit on December 11th. **Julia Huttar Bailey** is being ordained to the diaconate, and her sister **Lydia Huttar Brown** will be preaching at the ceremony. Julia continues to serve in an assisting role at St. Paul's in Brighton.



Christmas Poinsettias and Altar Flowers

Envelopes for Christmas Flower donations are in the pews. Please clearly fill out the information, and place in the collection plate or return it to the church office by December 19.

Altar Flowers for 2011—Sign-up sheet is on a clipboard in the Commons. Multiple parties may sign up for each Sunday. Suggested donation is \$50-\$75 which can be submitted to the office. The altar vase liners will be taken to a florist weekly, and the flowers will be divided for delivery to home bound parishioners after the Sunday services.



Our Changing Earth . . . a Green Challenge to Grace

From Bill Mendenhall of the Taking Grace Green Committee

The editors of Orion Magazine (the non commercial, non profit publication about nature, culture, place) write in the November / December issue that we can no longer deny that our earth is in a predicament. Noting Bill McKibben's latest book, Eaarth, they state that the facts are clear . . . the longstanding equilibrium of our planet is changing and the fix is something we all have to participate in so that our species might endure for another century, or more.

Orion writes that "all across the planet people are engaged in activities that are killing oceans, fouling aquifers, poisoning topsoil, annihilating other species, warming the atmosphere at an unprecedented rate, and altering our very own physiology in profoundly negatives ways."

Today you can't find a single credible scientist anywhere in the world that would deny we are in the midst of global warming. We can't sit by and wait for others to fix it. We can all start doing some things to do good.

I went to a Green Business Sustainable Energy presentation at the Herrick Library on October 26. Energy managers from Haworth and Herman Miller discussed how they were working to reduce their carbon impact on the environment. And, Jim MacInnes, the CEO of Crystal Mountain Resort and Spa, gave a talk on how they worked to best manage energy and all of their resources. All speakers said the easiest thing to do to save energy and reduce emissions right now is conservation. They said we waste 20% of the energy we use today.

MacInnes said thought, planning and conservation in building, managing and operations can create huge energy and cost savings and reduce the impact their organization has on the planet. He described the time and care they put into creating Kinlochin, one of their signature lodges, designing it as a seventy five year building and considering how it would work with energy, water, and maintenance out into the future. He described working with their electrical energy supplier so they could stop making snow for four hours at peak grid power one winter night each month . . . and save \$20,000+. He described how they took 50 degree well water and ran it into chillers in their buildings to pre cool their refrigerators and air conditioning, versus total reliance on electrical cooling, and then ran the water out to the ponds on the golf courses . . . thus using water twice. He said they did these things to conserve, save money, and because they are the right things to do.

Over the next year the recently reformed Taking Grace Green Committee will promote a monthly Challenge to Grace people to do something good, measure the results, and then move to the next monthly Challenge. We will challenge you with single ideas that will help conserve resources and save money.

The December Challenge is that each of you who is able replace up to half of the regular incandescent light bulbs in your house with CFL fluorescent or LED bulbs, save the regular bulbs and bring them to church so we can do a count. We'll have boxes for the bulbs in drawers in the Commons. If you put the bulbs in places in your home that stay on for more than a few minutes, you will use 75% less electricity than with the old bulb. We will then use the old bulbs a second time giving them to Community Action House for distribution.

Please plan to join us in our environmental stewardship Challenge effort in December and each month over the coming calendar year. Together we can start to make a 20% conservation difference . . . and do something good for our planet.

A Calendar of Worship for the Seasons

December 19

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Holy Eucharist at 8:15 am

Intergenerational Education Hour at 9:15 am

Holy Eucharist with Lessons and Carols at 10:30 am

December 24

Christmas Eve

Christmas Eve Holy Eucharist at 6:00 pm This is a service especially geared to children. The liturgy will be a participatory children's homily, children's choir, special prayers, and celebration of the Eucharist. (The nursery space will be open and available for parents' use.)

Choral Service of Christmas Carols at 10:00 pm*

Traditional Midnight Service of Holy Eucharist at 10:30 pm*

(Childcare will be provided in the nursery. You may want to bring your child's night time toy and/or blanket and pillow.)

December 26

First Sunday after Christmas

One service of Holy Eucharist at 10:30 am*

(NOTE: one service only)

January 2, 2011

Second Sunday after Christmas

Holy Eucharist at 8:15 and 10:30 am*

Intergenerational Education Hour at 9:15 am*

Please also note

January 23

Holy Eucharist at 8:15 and 10:30 am

Our Annual Meeting with brunch will follow the 10:30 service *

* child care provided at these services

Birthdays & Anniversaries in December

- 1 Charlie Broersma
- 2 Andrew Schafer
Molly McVay-Walters
- 4 Sophia Steele
Barb Vincensi
- 5 Gerard Cook
- 6 Danielle Biolette
Lindsay Goodman
Gloria Hignite
Jeremy Stauffer
- 8 Katie Gamby
- 9 Sandy Hansen
Jorie Sligh
Patricia Essenburg
Libby Thomas
- 10 Chris St. John
- 11 Steve Shinabarger
- 12 Isabel Hodson
- 13 Earl Barkel
- 14 Jill Smalldon
Karlyn March
Andrew Macy
- 19 Eleanor Nyhof
Tommy Miller
- 20 David Meier
Andrew Scharlow
- 22 Derek Foster
- 23 Matthew Guyer
- 25 Carol Homan
Kathryn Verspoor
- 26 David Hawley-Lowry
Jersey Masselink
- 27 Rob Linn
- 28 Enrique Garcia
Holly Nyland
Brad Richmond
- 31 Jennifer Balisi



- 9 Dianne & Curtis Glupker
- 18 Lynne & Bob Frey
- 19 Monny & Bryce Cobb
Sharon & John Barlow
- 20 Pat & Warren Parker
- 21 Chris & Rick Van Tongeren
- 27 Mary Mims &
Brent VanderBie
- 28 Jane & Dennis Joles
- 29 Donna & John Molendyk
- 30 Mary & Kevin Matrosic
- 31 Ruth Fischer & Bill Paterson

Birthdays & Anniversaries in January

- 1 Richard Swaney
Phillip Reinink
- 2 Vivian Kingsley
Jennifer Wolfe
- 3 Kristie Phillips
- 4 Devin Shea
Lourdes Manderfield
Christoph Manderfield
- 5 Brian Coyle
- 6 Rob Sligh
Brian Essenburg
- 7 Krista Raffenaud
Stafford Keegin
Emily Wright
- 8 Elizabeth Phillips
Samantha Brown
- 10 Gladys Woodward
Grafton Ervine
Simon Hodson
- 11 John Barlow
- 12 David Wright
Joan Breitmeyer
- 14 Liza Barry
Ron Brown
- 15 Tom Kelley
- 16 Mark Borgman
- 17 Roger De Cook
Mike Erickson
- 18 David Raffenaud
- 21 Christopher Packard
- 23 Heather Klamt
Clay Stauffer
Mary Cotta
- 24 Miranda Rinks
- 25 Ronan Kelley
- 27 Anne Gamache
Dennis Joles
Ashlyn Jones
- 31 Sally Corneliussen



- 4 Lynn & Blane Kamp
- 7 Debbie & Brian Coyle
- 16 Betty & Gerald Sova
- 17 Cherie & Roger De Cook
- 19 Pam & Ron Brown
Karen & Jay Bylsma