



Vol. 55, January 2024

VOICE
OF
GRACE

You + Me = We

The greatest joys in our lives come from our relationships. We celebrate special occasions with our closest friends and family members. And we turn to the same people for comfort and consolation in difficult times. Our relationships make life worth living.

But our relationships can also be the biggest source of challenges in our lives. Severed relationships cause the most grief. Harsh words from those closest to us cause the sharpest stings. A rocky relationship weighs the heaviest burden on our minds.

When relationships are challenging, we have a few options. Our culture says that challenging relationships aren't worth it. People who don't make life easier or happier shouldn't be in our lives. People who don't agree with you shouldn't have their voice in your ear. Just cut ties with those people. End those relationships. Find people who only agree with you and bring you joy. That's the culture's option.

The problem comes when those challenging relationships are with people you love and care about. When your friend gets on your nerves. Or when your child has different ideals and values than you. Or when your spouse isn't bringing you the joy they used to. Those relationships are harder to throw away. And throwing away those relationships means losing the chance to witness the love of Jesus to them.

It's much harder to love people who think and believe differently than we. And it's uncomfortable to work through conflicts with our friends and family. It's difficult to spend the time and effort to build relationships that are strong and healthy. But those challenges are worth it. And it honors God when we love and value people enough to pour ourselves into our relationships.

God not only expects us to value our relationships, but He walks alongside us and helps us build strong relationships. Through His word (the Bible) and His Word

(Jesus), we see God's desire for our relationships and how we can strengthen our connections with the people closest to us. **Starting Christmas Eve and continuing through January, our sermon series "You + Me = We" will dig into God's Word for practical help to cultivate strong, healthy connections in our daily lives.**

The title of the series, "*You + Me = We*", encapsulates the essence of relationships by recognizing that a relationship's strength is in the unity and partnership of people, even in the face of challenges. And when we are better *at* our relationships, we will have better relationships. Each week, we'll look at a different aspect of healthy and thriving relationships to see how we can apply those traits to our lives. **Our hope is that through this series, you'll find inspiration and practical guidance to foster stronger, more meaningful connections in your life.**

Mark your calendars for the end of December through January, invite your friends, and embark on this journey with us. "*You + Me = We*" is not just a formula; it's an invitation to cultivate relationships that bring joy, resilience, and enduring love into your life. We look forward to building a stronger "We" together.

You + Me = We Sermon Series on Relationships

- Dec. 24 Starting With Love
(Love is Born – *Christmas Eve*)
- Dec. 31 *Bonus Sunday* Revising Assumptions
- Jan. 7 Actually Forgiving
- Jan. 14 Improving Communication
- Jan. 21 Navigating Conflicts

INSTALLATION OF OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND BOARD OF ELDERS SUNDAY, JANUARY 7, 2024

We thank our God for the dedicated service of the members of the Board of Directors, Board of Elders, and School Board. Please keep them in your prayers as we work together to promote the Kingdom of Christ.

Board of Directors 2024

| | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Dr. Ken Rogers, President | Dr. Don Eason, Board Member |
| Dr. Clifford Threlkeld, Past President | Steve Hnatiuk, Board Member |
| Ed Smith, Vice President | Claire Rice, Board Member |
| Alan Garbrecht, Secretary | Laurie Tremblay, Board Member |
| Barry Walker, Treasurer | Larry Walker, Board of Elders Rep |
| | Terry Tressler, Financial Secretary |

Board of Elders 2024

| | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Arlene Adams | Jerry Juergens | Keith Schelp |
| Greg Bluemke | Wendy Kirin | Jennifer Smith |
| Jerry Carter | Gerry Krigelski | Kathy Stevens |
| Liana Cobia | Ted Lasseigne | Jackie Stine |
| Lowell Fricker | Patti Meier | Tammi Straughn |
| Steve Griffith | Mary Beth Moore | Jan Struck |
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| Janet Hostler | Karen Nelson | Roger Walker (Head Elder) |
| Dr. Terry Hostler | Janet Pabor | Rhonda Wise |
| Christian Johnston | Rodney Petersen | Britta Witcher |
| Jim Joiner | Dennis Rick | |

School Board 2024

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Albert Cross, Chairman | Cynthia Cochran, Board Member |
| Elizabeth Davis, Vice Chair | Cyndi Threlkeld, Board Member |
| Beth Walters, Secretary | Mike Rottmann, Principal, Ex-Officio |
| Mark Irby, Board Member | The Rev. Charles T. Reich, Senior Pastor, E.O. |

2024 Book Review Series

Please join us for the 46th year of Book Reviews at Grace Lutheran Church! The dates are January 9, 16, 23 & 30. Begin with a lunch prepared and served by our Women's Ministry at 12:00 noon, with the review starting at approximately 12:25.

January 9, 2024

The Jekyll Island Club

Written by Brent Monahan

Reviewed by Dr. Cliff Threlkeld

January 16, 2024

Once You See: Seven Temptations of the Western

Church: A Novel

Written by Jeff Christopherson

Reviewed by Vicar Mark Esser

January 23, 2024

Warrior Monk: a Pastor Stephen Grant Novel

Written & Reviewed by Ray Keating

January 30, 2024

Reasons for Waking

Written by Karen Foster

Reviewed by Lisa Foster Hodes

Voice of Grace is published monthly by Grace Lutheran Church
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Winter Haven, FL 33880
www.glwh.org

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SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Gillian McIntee

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Susie Woods





JANUARY 27, 2024



BINGO!

Come and join the excitement at our National Youth Gathering Bingo Event! Experience the thrill of classic games led by a wonderful caller, offering numerous opportunities to win. Don't miss out on the fun-filled afternoon!

SUGGESTED DONATION OF \$15 TO PLAY

SATURDAY 3:00 PM

JOIN NOW

www.glwh.org



JANUARY 22, 2024



BINGO BASKETS NEEDED!



Have a small or large business? Know a small or large business that would love to support their local Youth Group?

Consider a basket donation for our Bingo Night. Select from one of our basket themes or create your own basket on our Sign-up Genius. Use the QR code above

NEEDED BY
JANUARY 22

JOIN NOW

www.glwh.org



Our first Nativity Walk went really well and was enjoyed by approximately 220 attending, not including Grace School students who attended on Friday afternoon. We received a lot of very positive comments from those attending. The refreshments of cookies and hot apple cider were also a big hit! Thank you to all who made this a successful event by sharing their Nativity sets and those who helped to set-up for the event. A special thank you to Peggy Griffin for all the extra time involved in putting together and printing the Nativity Booklets helping everyone to have more in-depth information of the Nativity. Peggy is always so willing to help.

As you may have already read, Grace will be having the "Book Reviews" again on Tuesdays in January. The Women's Ministry will again be preparing the lunches for this event. We hope many of you will be able to attend.

Our next upcoming fundraiser will be on the weekend of February 10 - 11. Our ladies will be busy baking for the annual chocolate bake sale. Since that weekend is also "Super Bowl" weekend, we will have snack items for sale that can be enjoyed while watching the weekend's special activities! All items will be available for purchase after the Saturday and Sunday services.

As always, we invite all women of Grace to join us at Martha Circle, meeting the second Thursday of each month at 1 PM. This is a great way to make new friends, have wonderful fellowship, and especially a time of Bible study with good discussions.



Grace Lutheran Church **Sunshine Club News**

Happy New Year!

January 4, 2024-Kick off the New Year with the Sunshine Club. Bring your favorite pot luck dish to share and we'll provide a very special surprise dessert to celebrate the New Year and YOU! We look forward to seeing you in the new year! Join us in Trinity Hall. Arrival begins at 11 AM - 11:30 Devotions and announcements, Lunch at Noon, Program begins at 12:30 PM. Deborah and David Pergande will share the highlights of their Belize Mission Society trip. Some of the highlights include working in the school and preschool, building a new shed and worshipping together. You'll want to see and hear how God's commandment "Love each other in the same way I have loved you" was put into action.



SAVE THE DATE—WED. JAN. 24, 2024 8:30-Noon National Lutheran Schools Week Grandparents'/ Grandfriends Day— Need volunteers to serve cookies in Trinity Hall and serve as Grandfriends.



February 1– Valentine themed Sunshine Club gathering. See you then!

One of the most active groups (1961-present) in our church community, Sunshine club focuses on individuals and couples, providing social interaction, support and spiritual growth. Join us the first Thursday of the month for food and fellowship. Everyone is welcome.

SENIOR SINGLES

Senior Singles, mark your calendars for **Monday, January 15**. We will enjoy lunch at Olive Garden at 11:30. Friends are always welcome. Meet at Olive Garden. Please call Deborah Pergande at (863) 293-2403 to let her know if you plan on attending. Please call by noon Friday, January 12, so that reservations can be made.

AMERICAN HERITAGE GIRLS AND TRAIL LIFE

The American Heritage Girls troop and Trail Life troop packed 47 Operation Christmas Child boxes.

The troops are doing amazingly well. We are outreaching to so many. We currently have 23 Trail Men and 38 American Heritage Girls from 40+ families. This year American Heritage Girls are focusing on the basics of the Bible and getting Bibles into the girls' hands during the meeting. The Trail Life trail men just learned of Christian Heritage and why Grace Lutheran is called a Lutheran Church.

We had over 130 attend our recent joining award ceremony. We learned about why we decorate Christmas trees and their significance to Christ while decorating some trees of our own. Seventeen girls and eight boys officially joined our troops this fall. God continues to bless this ministry's reaching out to families in our community.



The August and Mildred Bernthal Scholarship Fund

Pastor August and Mildred Bernthal left a legacy to our school by first starting Grace Lutheran School and then establishing a scholarship fund. They wanted to be sure that members of Grace who wished to enroll their children in the school could do it even if they faced financial barriers. Many people have benefited from this fund over the years - until recently. Now, because of the State of Florida's Step-Up program, any child can attend Grace! But with a greater and more varied population at our school, new problems have emerged. There are students who are struggling in school and need some extra help. To address this problem, the school started an after-school tutoring program. High quality tutors are available to address the skills the students need help with; however, this help comes at a cost that many of our families cannot afford. Grace's School Board has decided to add another purpose to the scholarship fund – to supplement the cost of tutoring. Also, if a child needs academic testing for a learning disability, this fund can help parents pay for the cost of that testing.

So, if you have ever given to this fund know that it will continue to enrich the students of our school. If you have never given before, consider a donation to help us in its new expanded purpose. If you have any questions about the fund, you can address them to Krista Bernthal, August and Mildred's daughter-in-law, who is heading up the tutoring program. bernthalk@gmail.com, 803-269-9919.



How Do You Sign Up with Grace Lutheran Church/Vanco Online Giving?

It's easy! Grace Lutheran utilizes Vanco, an online eGiving and payment tool. If you are a new giver to the Lord's work at Grace Lutheran, visit our website at www.glwh.org to **create a Vanco Online account**. Click "GIVE" and then click "**Electronic Giving and Donations**" in blue (<https://secure.myvanco.com/YNG6/home>) to be linked to our giving page at VANCO. From there, you can read more about our mission and give to our ministries.

To locate the **GIVING APP** for your cell phone or iPad, search and download "**Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement**" in your app store and link it to "Grace Lutheran Church Winter Haven."

You can also visit [Vanco Online How-To Guide](#) for step-by-step instructions.

Going forward, prior to giving again on the website or app, **always log in to your account first** so that your payment information and giving history will be readily available to you.

We are excited about the Lord's ministry at Grace and the ease of giving online. Please stop by the church office or call **Carrie Beckwith – Finance Administrator at (863)293-8447** if you have questions or need assistance.

**Treasurer's Report for Grace Lutheran
Income Statement Compared to Budget
For the Four Months Ending October 31, 2023**

| | Current Month Actual | Year to Date Actual | Year to Date Budget | Variance |
|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| <u>Church</u> | | | | |
| Income | \$ 176,217.24 | \$ 558,704.50 | \$ 603,966.68 | \$ (45,262.18) |
| Expenses | \$ 104,022.20 | \$ 410,672.57 | \$ 471,936.01 | \$ (61,263.44) |
| Total Church | \$ 72,195.04 | \$ 148,031.93 | \$ 132,030.67 | \$ 16,001.26 |

| | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <u>School</u> | | | | |
| Income | \$ 549,308.36 | \$ 1,008,731.88 | \$ 1,093,090.63 | \$ (84,358.75) |
| Expenses | \$ 297,222.55 | \$ 1,119,419.08 | \$ 1,178,637.36 | \$ (59,218.28) |
| Net | \$ 252,085.81 | \$ (110,687.20) | \$ (85,546.73) | \$ (25,140.47) |
| Designated (In/Out Accounts) | \$ 6,822.34 | \$ (9,927.87) | | |
| Total School | \$ 245,263.47 | \$ (100,759.33) | | |

Investment Assets

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Church Investments - Restricted | \$ 983,557.88 |
| Church Endowment Fund | \$ 1,289,176.80 |
| School Endowment Fund | \$ 990,888.24 |
| Bernthal Endowment Scholarship Fund | \$ 134,874.45 |
| All Other Scholarships/Investments | \$ 23,582.85 |

**Parish Statistics****Marriages**

Jenna Ogle & Steven Lipham - 11/10/2023
Daniel Kirin & Sierra Rivera - 11/25/2023

Deaths

Gillian Mary Clarke - 11/8/2023
Bob Pintsch - 12/12/2023



JANUARY 24, 2024

Name _____

Email _____

Phone (best contact number) _____

We need volunteers to fill the various roles listed below. Our school currently has an enrollment of 431 students, so if every student brings one grandparent/grandfriend we'll have approximately 800 people on campus. Imagine if every student brought two guests...the possibility exists for over 1,000 people to be here. While that's a huge number, it is also very exciting! That's why we are asking for your help.

Complete this form and return to the church office no later than January 5, 2024. Once your registration is received and we have volunteer assignments ready to share, you'll be contacted to confirm your assignment.

QUESTIONS? Please call or text Tammi Straughn, 863-660-2617 or email at tstraughn0724@gmail.com.

Feel free to either scan or photograph this form and email or text to Tammi.

_____ **GRAND FRIEND**-8:30-Noon Some students do not have grandparents that are local to the area and need a special Grandfriend to join them for the day while navigating the various activities. A student will be assigned to you and you can fill this special role for them that day.

_____ **PARKING LOTS**—Greet and welcome guests, assist the WH Police Department with directing our guests to the appropriate parking lot and give directional guidance as to how to enter the building and find the guest check-in. Time-7:45 am to 9:15am.

_____ **CHURCH SANCTUARY**— 8:30am-Noon— Greet, welcome and guide guests to their color coded seating section. Assist with pairing group 1 students with their grandparents. There are 4– 25 minutes sessions. Chapel worship will be held during each session.

_____ **COVERED PAVILLION**-8:30am-Noon— Greet, welcome and assist guests and students with a keepsake, take home craft activity. There are 4-25 minute sessions.

_____ **SCHOOL GYM**-8:30-Noon Greet, welcome and guide guests to activities. You need to be willing to join in, have fun and show a lot of enthusiasm with the guests and students. There are 4-25 minute sessions.

_____ **TRINITY HALL**-8:30am-Noon— Greet, welcome and direct guests to food, photo booth, and book fair. Tasks-organize guests in the photo booth line, clear tables, and reset the room for the next group. There are 4-25 minute sessions.

Grace Lutheran School Pre-School 2's-8th Grade News

Phone: 863-293-9744

SCHOOL WEBSITE: school.glwh.org



Athletics

On Friday, December 1, the soccer and volleyball teams had the end of season celebration. The soccer teams met after school for ice cream and drinks provided by the sports boosters. The volleyball teams enjoyed pizza provided by the sports boosters; the players brought drinks and cookies. The highlight of the volleyball celebration was the parents vs. players matches in the gym. Thanks to all who participated.

The basketball teams have started the season, and the JV and varsity boys beat St. Paul on November 30.

The varsity girls' first games were at the Grace Invite that we hosted on Saturday, December 9. During this tournament, the varsity boys and girls played games vs. Grace St. Pete and Grace Jax.

The varsity boys also participated in the local public school county tournament on December 6, 7, and 9.

Go Lions!!

Music

Our Christmas programs took place over three weeks in November and December. They were led by Preschool, K - 2nd Grade, and 3rd - 5th Grade, featuring the Middle School Chorus.

In addition to all these performers, many of our 6th - 8th grade students are serving behind the scenes setting up risers, running the livestream, and more.

Middle School Chorus led Christmas caroling for the Candy Cane Cinema event on December 8.

5th Grade went caroling at local nursing homes on December 15.



Early Childhood

November was a busy month for our Preschool littles. We had a wonderful time at our Fall Fest, where we had three successful booths. We also hosted our Thanksgiving Feast where we had a wonderful morning of gathering and giving thanks with family and friends. On November 29, Preschool participated in the Wednesday church services to present their Christmas program. The teachers and students did a wonderful job singing and telling the story of Jesus' birth. Thank you Mrs. Klemetson for your help with the music.



Artists of the month

Cadence - 2nd grade
Lane - 5th grade
Amelia - 6th grade



SCHOOL CALENDAR

January

3: School Resumes
Beginning of 3rd Quarter
9 - 18: Boosterthon
10: Uniform Sales 7:30AM - 4:00PM
Youth Group 6:00 - 8:00PM
15: No School - MLK Jr. Day
16: Class Pictures
21 - 28: Scholastic Book Fair
22 - 26: National Lutheran Schools Week
24: Early Release Day
Grandparents' Day
Youth Group 6:00 - 8:00PM
29 - Feb. 2: MAP Testing (Grades 4 - 8)
31: Uniform Sales 7:30AM - 4:00PM


February

3: CFLAA Basketball Tournament
5 - 9: MAP Testing (Grades K - 3)
5: Midterm of 3rd Quarter
7: Uniform Sales 7:30AM - 4:00PM
14: Ash Wednesday
Youth Group 6:00 - 8:00PM
16: Early Release Day
16 - 18: FLAA State Basketball Tournament
19: No School - President's Day
28: Uniform Sales 7:30AM - 4:00PM
Youth Group 6:00 - 8:00PM
29: \$2 N.U.T. Day

THE MISSION STATEMENT OF GLS: The mission of Grace Lutheran School is to provide its students and their families with a strong spiritual and academic foundation so that they know and understand God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ and are also able to live lives appropriate to their positions in their families, churches, community, and country.



JANUARY

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|---|---|--|---|---|
| | 1 Office Closed  | 2 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff 12 PM God's Guys 5:30 PM Prayer Svc 6 PM AHG/TL 7 PM Praise Rehearsal | 3 7:30 AM Staff Devos 1 PM WM Board Mtg. 6 PM Confirmation | 4 9 AM LWR Quilters 11 AM Sunshine Club 6 PM Trinity Bells 7:15 PM Grace Chorale | 5 10 AM Bible Study w/ Pastor Meyer | 6 5 PM Worship Svc |
| 7 8:30 AM Worship 9:45 AM Bible Study & Sunday School 9:45 AM Nativity Walk 10:45 AM Worship | 8 7:30 AM Staff Devos 7 PM Elder Meeting | 9 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff 5:30 PM Prayer Svc 7 PM Praise Rehearsal | 10 6 PM Youth Group | 11 9 AM LWR Quilters 1 PM Martha Circle 3:15 PM Grace Choristers 6 PM Trinity Bells 7:15 PM Grace Chorale | 12 10 AM Bible Study w/ Pastor Meyer | 13 5 PM Worship Svc |
| 14 8:30 AM Worship 9:45 AM Bible Study & Sunday School 9:45 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Worship 12 PM Families in the Park | 15 MLKJ DAY No School Church Office Closed | 16 7:30 AM Staff Devos 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff 12 PM God's Guys 5:30 PM Prayer Svc 6 PM AHG/TL 7 PM Praise Rehearsal | 17 6 PM Confirmation 6 PM Stephen Ministry | 18 9 AM LWR Quilters 3:15 PM Grace Choristers 6 PM Trinity Bells 7:15 PM Grace Chorale | 19 10 AM Bible Study w/ Pastor Meyer | 20 5 PM Worship Svc |
| 21 8:30 AM Worship 9:45 AM Bible Study & Sunday School 10:45 AM Worship | 22 7:30 AM Staff Devos 6 PM School Board | 23 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff 12 PM God's Guys 5:30 PM Prayer Svc 7 PM Praise Rehearsal | 24 National Lutheran Schools Week Grandparents Day | 25 9 AM LWR Quilters 1 PM Adult Game Day 3:15 PM Grace Choristers 6 PM Trinity Bells 7:15 PM Grace Chorale | 26 10 AM Bible Study w/ Pastor Meyer | 27 3 PM Bingo Youth Fundraiser - TH 5 PM Worship Svc |
| 28 8:30 AM Worship 9:45 AM Bible Study & Sunday School 10:45 AM Worship | 29 7:30 AM Staff Devos 5:30 PM Business Management 6:30 BOD Meeting | 30 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff 5:30 PM Prayer Svc 6 PM Exec. Elders 7 PM Praise Rehearsal | 31 6 PM Youth Group | | | |



VOICE OF GRACE

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Winter Haven, FL 33880

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CONNECTING PEOPLE TO JESUS