

The Pipeliner Newsletter of  
Grace Lutheran Church  
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# Grace To Go



The Season of **Epiphany** is the eight-week journey of coming to put our faith in the belief that God not only exists but is embodied in Jesus of Nazareth.

Pastor's Corner

## "New You"

### New Year—New You!

That's not quite how it works. For all the hype and celebration, the reality is that the new year is simply another changing of the month of the calendar. The new year changes nothing other than you being one day older than you were yesterday.

But the "new you" is not a fiction—it is your reality in Christ Jesus. Paul is uncharacteristically succinct in 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." And this "new creation" is every day. St. Peter writes that "baptism...NOW saves you..." Now, every day, even every moment that you appeal to Christ in your Holy Baptism you are made new and holy to God.

St. Paul many times admits he is not perfect; he is a sinner every day. Yet he writes, "forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." By faith you are made new every day.

I hope we all have a blessed new year in 2025. But whatever it brings, wake up each day in your Holy Baptism knowing that by grace you are indeed a holy child of God. Forgetting what is behind you, each day go out and strive to live this new reality to His glory.

### Lectionary Readings:

January 5, 2025 —(White) 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Christmas	Isaiah 60:1–6; Ephesians 3:1–12; Matthew 2:1–1
January 12, 2025—(White) Baptism of our Lord	Isaiah 43:1–7; Romans 6:1–11; Luke 3:15–22
January 19, 2025—(Green) 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany	Isaiah 62:1–5; 1 Corinthians 12:1–11; John 2:1–11
January 26, 2025 —(Green) 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany	Nehemiah 8:1–3, 5–6, 8–10; 1 Corinthians 12:12–31a; Luke 4:16–30

### Altar Guild:

January 5, 2024—Mary Lou & Lorie  
January 12, 2024— Jerrie & Stacie  
January 19, 2024—John & Rana  
January 26, 2024— Pastor and Bridgette

### Lectors:

Belinda Thibodaux  
Bonnie Boger  
Dale Boger  
Mona LaCour

### 2025 Board of Directors

President: Michael Cape  
Board Secretary: Bridgette Rudnik  
Vice-President: Bonnie Dupre  
Financial Secretary: Lisa Giroir  
Treasurer: Jeannie Thalheim  
Board Members at Large: Jerrie Fitzgerald and Mary Lou Johnston

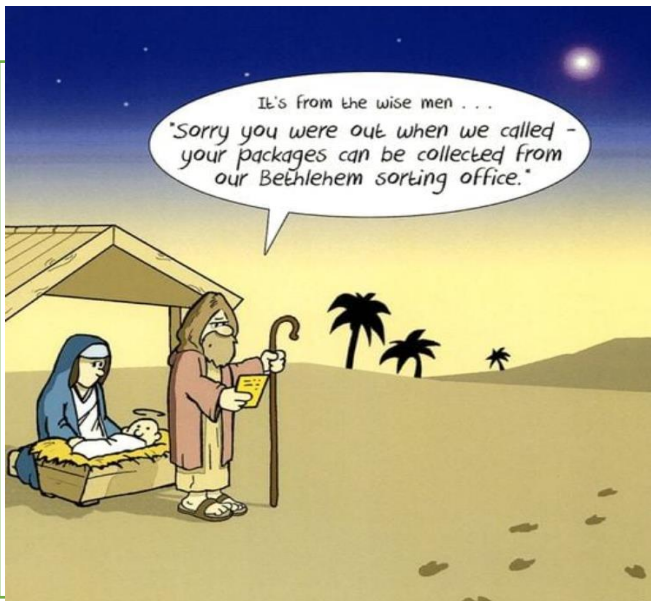
January 2025 Newsletter articles should be turned in to the church office by Thursday, December 26th. You may email these to secretary@gracehouma.org

## GLC BULLET NEWS

- Bible study is at 6pm on Mondays in the conference room
- Bible study is at 1:00pm on Tuesdays in the conference room
- 6pm Wednesday Night Prayer & Praise devotions are based on weird sayings in the Bible.

The Created Male and Female Parent Retreat, designed to support LCMS parents of children who are dealing with sexual orientation and gender identity issues, will once again be offered next spring, on April 8–12, 2025 at a retreat center in Wickenburg, Arizona. If you would like more information, please email Pastor Rich at [pastor@gracehouma.org](mailto:pastor@gracehouma.org).

A wise man once told his wife:  
Nothing, for he was a wise man.



## Repenting of “Yours” and “Mine”

Retailers have had their Christmas displays up since before Reformation Sunday. The kids have made their list and checked it twice, or three times or more. It won't be long before the tree will start shedding its needles, the stockings emptied, the gifts unwrapped, toys broken, and the too small or out of style clothes returned. Before we know it, the annual celebration of Christmas will be over.

But for the children of God, we know that the gift of Christmas doesn't ever end. Week in and week out, the Lord continues to shower His gifts on us. Every time the Lord gathers us to His house, and we are led to kneel at His table, the gift of forgiveness is repeatedly granted to us. It is nothing we deserve. It comes to us freely!

The fourth stanza of the stewardship hymn, “Forgive Us Lord for Shallow Thankfulness” (LSB 788) highlights both this gift and our response.

Teach us, O Lord, true thankfulness divine,  
that gives as Christ gave, never counting cost

To learn thankfulness is necessary. The parents of young children are well-versed in the fact that they must teach their children thankfulness. It does not come naturally. The spiritual genetics inherited from our parents allow us to think that the world revolves around us. When we receive something, there is an inward desire to think that we in some way deserve it.

But there is no way that we deserve anything we get from our Lord. We need that ongoing lesson from God Himself. Thankfulness toward God is worked in us by the Holy Spirit. God's Word works this thanksgiving in us. We need this weekly reminder that Jesus didn't consider “equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself” for us, to the point of death on a cross (Phil. 2:6). He didn't bat an eye. He paid the price! Our life of stewardship is one of daily and weekly thanksgiving inspired by the Lord Himself.

That knows no barrier of “yours” and “mine,” assured that only what's withheld is lost. Because Jesus gave us everything and more, there can be no ownership. The child at Christmas is quick to claim that the newly gifted toy is “mine!” But as Psalm 24:1 asserts, “The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.” There isn't anything in creation that is ours. When we cling to and claim ownership of anything in creation, we are losing out on the continual gifts with which the Lord desires to shower upon us. Closed hands cannot receive anything new. We cling to the old and dead and miss the new thing that the Lord desires to do in and for us.

We are led to repent of the “yours” and “mine” and remove the lie that we have any ownership. In this we have the promise that God will continue to give to us. Not just at Christmas, but every Sunday at the altar in the Lord's house.

## Sanctus

The Sanctus is sung by the congregation recalling the song of the angels in the prophet Isaiah's vision of God in His holy abode (Isaiah 6:30). The Hosanna's also recall Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem when the people shouted “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” (Matthew 21:9) The Sanctus is a confession of what we believe is happening in the Service of the Sacrament—God's own holy son is coming to us with eternal blessings!

## In the palm of God's Hands...

**PRESSING HEALTH CONCERNS:** Michael St. Amant.

**BATTLING CANCER:** Annick George Matherne, Eldon Authement, Isla Granger, Jenny Ford, Lance Griffin, Laura Robson, Michael Hamilton and Noah Donnes

**RECOVERING FROM SURGERY/INJURY:** Donna Elke and Jacqui Kaplan

**CHRONIC CONDITIONS & ELDERLY:** Connie Oswalt, DeAnn Barrios, Ellen DeSoto, Frank Alessio, Gloria Ashley, Jackie Webb, James Hillman, Jaxon Greene, Joe Deane, John Wegner, Kim Cape, Lyle Souther, Marilyn Beach, Mary Jane Schouest, Mike Wallace, Patsy Wegner, Rhonda Roan, Richard LaCour, and Toni St. Amant

**MOURNING A LOSS:** The families of Betty Melancon, Cindy Deane, Rev. David Green and Sue Ackett

**NEW & EXPECTING MOTHERS:** Allyssa Andrews & Owen

**SERVING IN OUR ARMED FORCES & THEIR FAMILY:** Avery St. Amant, Chandler Crawford, Haily Crawford, Haize Shroyer, Jason Reid-O'Neill, Julia Shroyer, Justin Scherf, Katie Cahill, Kyle Turcott, Lei'Lyn Hebert, Noah Scheufens, and Todd Mueller.

**COLLEGE STUDENTS:** Alyssah Kinsella, Donovan Domangue, Gabbie Corbitt, Hannah Norman, Jacob Harding, Nicholas Scott, Peyton Kraus, Shelby Giroir and Victoria Thalheim.

## Grace's Mission

*Building one body in Christ through Worship, Witness, Stewardship, Service, Love, Teaching and Fellowship*