



WHAT'S GOING ON AT GRACE: DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

**ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS:
ADVENT IN PLAIN SIGHT**



Ministers' Message: Advent in Plain Sight

*I wait for the LORD – my soul waits, and in the LORD's word I hope;
my soul waits for the LORD –
more than those who watch for the morning,
more than those who watch for the morning.
Psalm 130: 5-6*

Advent is here. Advent – the days before Christmas where we are invited to wait for the Lord. But what does it mean to wait for the Lord?

Is waiting for the Lord as simple as using an Advent calendar to mark each day leading up to Christmas? Or is waiting for the Lord making sure decorations are up, gifts are wrapped, and favourite Christmas movies are watched all while being fueled by Christmas cake from Grace?

All of what is listed above could be ways of waiting for the Lord if these things help you or me to open ourselves up to God's presence in everyday life, because waiting for the Lord is being open to God's presence in the ordinary and everyday stuff of life. Grace is exploring the idea of Advent In Plain Sight this year. The idea of Advent being in plain sight is meant to jolt us from only paying attention to the busyness and rush to Christmas in these upcoming days. Advent In Plain Sight is meant to refocus our attention to the light of God's hope, peace, joy, and love being a part of our ordinary and everyday lives. Advent In Plain Sight is a reminder we are invited into sensing God's movement with renewed hope and active anticipation.

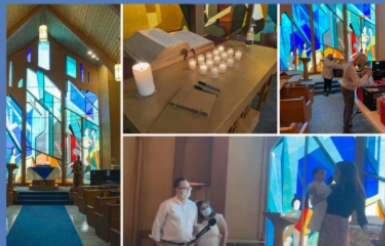
At Grace in Advent there are opportunities for connection, study, reflection, and having fun together as we sense God's presence among us. The opportunities include two book studies, a multi choir Advent concert and a messy church Christmas party (keep reading to find out more about the studies, the concert, the messy church Christmas party as well as other happenings at Grace in Advent and beyond).

Grace will also be worshipping regularly throughout Advent. A part of our worship will be lighting an advent candle each Sunday as a reminder of the growing light of God's presence coming into the world, accompanied by reading and hearing from scripture, singing and music, preaching, and prayer. In worship on Sunday, December 4 we will also share the bread and the cup as we celebrate communion.

On Christmas Eve Grace will be having an interactive and family-friendly service at 4:00 p.m. and a service of communion and candlelight at 8:00 p.m. On Christmas Day, Grace will have a Service of Lessons and Carols at 10:30 a.m. Grace will also worship on Sunday, January 1 at 10:30 a.m. and again we will share the bread and the cup as we celebrate communion.

Please know that you and your loved ones are invited to explore Advent In Plain Sight, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day at Grace! Together, let's connect, reflect, have fun, and share how God is present in our lives as we live into our vision of transforming lives – our own included – through God's grace as we wait for the Lord!

- The Rev. Jake Van Pernis, The Rev. Christian Persaud, and The Rev. Maren Mclean Persaud (Rev. Maren is on parental leave until April 2023)



November Snapshots

November included: Worship and fellowship time (new faces, old friends, remembering those who have passed), Remembrance Service, Youth Lunch, Plastics Count, Grace Quilters Gift Sale, Bethany, 60th Anniversary of the Grace Memorial Chapel Congregational Lunch, Congregational Meeting, start of Advent, and more...



Reconnection at Grace

This fall, Grace has been reconnecting as a congregation, Church family, and as a Beltline neighbour. The building is in far greater use as well - in the month of October, there were 101 events and meetings (online and in-person) at Grace. In the month of November, there were 110. This Advent and Christmas is an opportunity to further our connections through worship, events, and gatherings.

A special thank you to those who shared special memories for the 60th Anniversary of the dedication of the Grace Memorial Chapel. Here is one of

those memories:

-In 1974 my husband, Michael, and I were married in the beautiful chapel. He says it was the best day of his life.

- Broda



Congregational Story: Congregational Meeting and 2023 Budget

On Sunday, November 27 Grace held the Congregational Meeting and passed the 2023 Budget. Click to find the materials and budget documents.

[Read More](#)

Time, Talent and Treasury at Grace
Gratitude and Generosity



Grace Presbyterian Church
Transforming lives through God's grace

Embracing the Evolving Culture: Shifting into

Stewardship by focusing on Gratitude and Generosity for Gifts of Time, Talent, and Treasure

Grace is grateful for the gifts of time, talent and treasure that are shared, and is focusing on recognition and gratitude for these gifts as well as stewardship. The Stewardship Committee has formed and begun work.

October: Learning, Personalization and Recognition

In October, members of the Stewardship Committee and Finance Committee met with Karen Plater, Associate Secretary of Stewardship and Planned Giving at The Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC), to learn more about resources and strategies from the PCC.

A volunteer recognition event, *Blessed to be a Blessing*, was held in October. Cindy Stephenson, Coordinator of Volunteers and Convener of the Stewardship Committee, invited more than 170 volunteers personally.

November: Planning, Celebration of Ministries, and Personal Thank Yous for Gifts

At the November 27 Congregational Meeting, in addition to the financial budget, a [Narrative Budget](#) was presented (this budget is featured in the video above). This style of budget celebrates ministries and shows where time, talent and treasure are invested and how we are seeking to live our:

- Vision - Transforming lives through God's Grace
- Mission - Inspired by the Holy Spirit, we grow disciples of Jesus Christ to love our neighbours and effect social change
- Values: Engagement, Belonging, Community, Compassion, and Service

A framework and workplan has been developed and goes to Session in January. Cindy Stephenson is also calling and thanking all who shared gifts of time, talent and treasure this year.

December: Thank Yous and recognition that everyone has something to give

This December, thank you calls continue. Freewill offering donations have also been added to the Christmas OPEN MIC NIGHT and the *All is Calm, All is Bright* Music Concert, with a link for online giving at any time, or offerings at the door by cash, cheque, debit or credit card.

Grace recognizes that everyone has something to give - and asks everyone to consider what gifts they have been blessed with and what they can give to further Grace's vision, mission and values as 2022 comes to a close and we enter 2023.



*Together, we love
our neighbours and
effect social change.*

Everyone has something to give

Grace is grateful for every gift of talent, time and treasure. Together they power our broad scope of programs and ministries.

- Together, we engage new members and connecting in fellowship as we participate in worship in-person and online and deepen faith through studies.
- Together we support our community and neighbours with food security initiatives, language lessons, and safe events.
- Together we support social justice causes that help give voice to the voiceless, addressing poverty, mental health, racism, discrimination, human rights and care of the Earth.

Thank you for sharing your blessings with Grace – they have impact! How blessed we are to each have something to give!

As we fulfill Grace's Vision and Mission and live our Values, and as we look forward to Advent and to hopes for 2023, please consider what you can contribute. Do you have time, talent, treasure to give?

Please email Cindy Stephenson, at volunteers@gracecalgary.org. You can also refer to our Giving and Financials page here:

www.gracechurchcalgary.com/givingandfinancials/ and to

www.gracechurchcalgary.com/volunteer/ for giving options and opportunities.



CHURCH BUSINESS:

MAJOR MONTHLY CONGREGATIONAL ANNOUNCEMENTS, DECISIONS AND UPDATES

Monthly Fall Financial Update

Please find the [Financial Budget for 2023](#) along with the [Narrative Budget](#). The budget was passed at the Sunday, November 27 Congregational Meeting.

*Find full financials on the [Giving and Financials website page \(find monthly, periodic, and annual financial reports, as well as Report to Congregation and Community with 2021 financial snapshot\)](#).

Lead Minister Search Committee Update

At the Sunday, November 27 Congregational Meeting, the Lead Minister Search Committee shared updates based on this [report](#).

Year-End Donations and 2022 Tax Receipts: Frequently Asked Questions

Thank you for the gifts of financial donations throughout the year, and at year-end. The Treasurer, Rob McDonald, has been asked multiple questions recently about year-end donations and tax receipts. Here are answers.

Does Grace accept donations of securities?

Grace does gratefully accept donations of securities. If you would like a tax receipt for 2022, the securities need to be transferred to our agent by mid-December.

When do general donations need to be made for a 2022 tax receipt?

If you are making a general donation and would like a tax receipt in 2022 for that contribution, Grace must receive the cheque or cash contribution by December 31. If you are sending a donation through the mail, it must be postmarked on or before December 31 to be eligible for a 2022 tax receipt.

When are tax receipts issued by Grace?

Tax receipts will be issued for the 2022 taxation year towards the end of January - first part of February 2023. If you make an online donation through CanadaHelps, the receipt is issued automatically.

How do I get more information?

If you have further questions about giving or tax receipts, please visit the [Giving Page](#), or contact Rob McDonald at robm@gracecalgary.org. Rob would be happy to answer

any questions or provide information to you.

Session Highlights: November 14 (Session meetings take place monthly.)

At its regular meeting on November 14, the Session:

- reflected on Deuteronomy 32:7-12 and Hebrews 11:1-3 and was reminded of the stories of faith and hope in the wilderness
- was thankful for the fellowship and success of the recent craft sale
- appreciated the pastoral care facilitated by the elders reporting on their districts
- observed that there is a welcome sense of increasing connection within the congregation
- concurred with the Presbytery's approval of an extension of the stated supply agreement with the Rev. Christian Persaud through the end of June 2023
- appointed Sheila Kelly and the Rev. Dr. Jean Morris as members of the Preaching Grace Committee. The Rev. Dr. Joni Sancken will be the guest preacher for Preaching Grace 2023, May 5-7
- reviewed the budget for 2023 to be approved at the Congregational Meeting November 27. Committees were commended for their diligence in revisiting the preliminary spending plans. The Finance Committee will work with the Committees to provide detail on the timing of planned expenditures by month, to be able to closely monitor cash flow and spending. A comprehensive mid-year update will be prepared and shared with the congregation
- agreed to updates to the Roll, which now includes 391 professing members
- received an update from the Lead Minister Search Committee on its ongoing work
- was updated on the many opportunities for spiritual growth during Advent and Christmas
- received the report from the Support Services Director on the work of staff over the last month. It was noted that there were 101 individual events/activities at Grace during the month of October
- closed with prayers



RESET Society of Calgary Christmas Gift Bags

We are again making plans to create our annual 30 Christmas gift bags for the young women in the RESET program. Your wonderful donations of toiletry and items are

needed and very welcome in order to give the women a special gift.

RESET is a non-profit society that supports women as young as 16 & their children as they EXIT from sexual exploitation. They provide immediate safe and supportive Housing to begin the process of healing into a healthy productive new life.

Items Needed:

• shampoo • conditioner • body lotions • toothpaste and brushes • soaps • beauty items • hair brushes • lip balm

Please drop your donations in the bin at the entryway door to the family room by Sunday, December 11. Monetary donations are also very welcome.

Winter Calendar: Activities, Events & Opportunities

Advent at Grace: Advent in Plain Sight

There are two Advent studies for 2022. Both studies are four weeks long.

Advent in Plain Sight Advent Study, Led by Rev. Jake Van Pernis

Tuesday Evenings, 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., online and in-person

Sign up [here](#)

- Week 2: Tuesday, December 6: Tears
- *Week 3: Sunday, December 11 at 7:00 p.m. online and in-person: Belts
- Week 4: Tuesday, December 20: Trees

Holy Disruption, Advent Study, Led by Rev. Christian Persaud

Thursday Mornings, 10:30 a.m. to Noon, online and in-person

Sign up [here](#)

- Week 1: Thursday, December 1: The End of the World As We Know It
- Week 2: Thursday, December 8: Peace on Earth, Goodwill to All
- Week 3: Thursday, December 15: Home for the Holidays

- Week 4: Thursday, December 22: Hidden in Plain Sight

December Dates:

- Thursday, December 1: Holy Disruption Advent Study Week 1: 10:30 a.m.
- Friday, December 2: Christmas BELTLINE OPEN MIC NIGHT: 7:00 p.m.
- Sunday, December 4: Peace, the Second Sunday in Advent; Holy Communion
- Tuesday, December 6: Advent in Plain Sight Advent Study Week 2: 7:00 p.m.
- Thursday, December 8: Holy Disruption Advent Study Week 2: 10:30 a.m.
- Friday, December 9: Poinsettias Arrive at Grace
- Saturday, December 10: All is Calm, All is Bright Music Concert, 7:00 p.m. Sign up [here](#).
- Sunday, December 11: Joy, the Third Sunday in Advent
 - Messy Church Christmas Party, Noon - 1:30 p.m. Sign up [here](#)
 - Poinsettias delivered to recipients
 - **Advent in Plain Sight Advent Study Week 3: 7:00 p.m.**
- Thursday, December 15: Holy Disruption Advent Study Week 3: 10:30 a.m.
- Sunday, December 18: Love, the Fourth Sunday in Advent (Fellowship Time - Christmas cookies!)
- Tuesday, December 20: Advent in Plain Sight Advent Study Week 4: 7:00 p.m.
- Thursday, December 22: Holy Disruption Advent Study Week 4: 10:30 a.m.
- Saturday, December 24: Christmas Eve Services: *Tentative services and times*
 - 4:00 p.m. Family-Friendly Service (In-person and livestreamed)
 - 8:00 p.m. Communion and Candlelight Service (in-person only)
- Sunday, December 25: Christmas Day Service 10:30 a.m. (in-person and livestreamed. There is no Sunday School.)
- Monday, December 26: Boxing Day Church Closed
- Tuesday, December 27: Holiday, Church Closed

2023 Winter Forecast Calendar

Committee planning is underway for the winter. Below please find activities with tentative dates, times and topics. Further details and additional activities will be added in monthly newsletters, on the website and in the bulletin as they are approved by Session and submitted by committees and project leads.

January:

- Sunday, January 1: New Year's Day, 10:30 a.m. Communion Service (There is no Sunday School for this service.)
- Monday, January 2: Holiday, Church closed
- Friday, January 6: Epiphany
- Sunday, January 8: Baptism of Jesus
- Sunday, January 8: Reception of New Members
- January 18-25: Prayer for Christian Unity
- Sun., January 29: Lunch N Learn, Convener and Session Liaisons Meeting

February: Lent

- Sunday, February 5: Presbyterian World Service and Development Day (PWS&D)
- Sunday, February 19: Transfiguration Sunday
- Monday, February 20: Family Day
- Tuesday, February 21: Shrove Tuesday
- Wednesday, February 22: Ash Wednesday Start of Lent

March: Lent

- Wednesday, Sunday, March 5: 1st Sunday in Lent
- March 8, International Women's Day
- Sunday, March 12: 2nd Sunday in Lent
- Sunday, March 19: 3rd Sunday in Lent
- Sunday, March 26: 4th Sunday in Lent

Welcome to Advent at a Glance



Worship Services

Sunday Worship Services

- Sundays at 10:30 am
(In-person and livestreamed)

Sunday, November 27 - Hope
 Sunday, December 4 - Peace
 Sunday, December 11 - Joy
 Sunday, December 18 - Love
 Sunday, December 25 - Lessons and Carols
 Sunday, January 1 - Communion

Advent Opportunities

Two 4-Week Advent Studies (In-Person and Online)

- **Advent in Plain Sight Study**
 - Tuesdays at 7:00 pm (*Week 3: Sun, Dec 11)
 - November 29 - December 20
- **Holy Disruption Study**
 - Thursdays at 10:30 am
 - December 1 - 22

Events

Christmas Eve Services

- 4:00 pm Family-Friendly Service
(In-person and livestreamed)
- 8:00 pm Communion Service with
Candlelight (In-person only)

- Friday, December 2 at 7:00 pm
Christmas OPEN MIC NIGHT
- Saturday, December 10 at 7:00 pm
All is Calm, All is Bright Music Concert
- Sunday, December 11 at noon
Messy Church Christmas Party

Learn more at
www.GraceChurchCalgary.com



Grace Presbyterian Church
Transforming lives through God's grace

Worship: In-Person and Online

Donate Online

Visit our
Website



Feedback

Our goal is to create value with this newsletter, so it's helpful to know what you think. Send your feedback to communications@gracecalgary.org. We may not always be able to incorporate suggestions, but we'll do what we can to respond to interest and need.

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