

Amazing Grace

December, 2020

Volume 39, Issue 12



Our mission to the Inland Empire is to be **heralds** of the transforming Gospel of Jesus Christ, **healers** to our brothers and sisters in Christ, and **upholders** of God's will and Word.

A MESSAGE from Pastor Maggard

Dear Saints of Grace,

Tis the season for stories!

I am enjoying another read through of "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens. Many great movies have been made with this story, but there is nothing quite like reading the original story. It does not preach Christ specifically, but it does highlight the seriousness of our impending death which is a great lesson for all of us. This artistic presentation of the Law prepares us well to hear the Gospel. Great stories have a way of presenting the natural order well. They capture our imagination and allow us to think about more than just ourselves.

The use of story is an important one in sharing our convictions. Katy Faust makes this point in her fight for children. She created an organization called "Them Before Us" (thembeforeus.com). Katy and her organization fight for the natural, God-given right of children to have access to both their biological fathers and mothers. She makes the point that stories move people. The people that defend babies in the womb and children in the home historically use arguments to make their case and not stories. The other side uses stories artfully to defend abortion and so-called "gay" marriage and very rarely use arguments. Arguments are a good thing. We have good reason to defend life in the womb and in the home. But we also need to tell great stories in defense of children. Katy Faust points out that great stories are out

there and is starting to collect them. Stories are powerful!

We respond so well to stories because God made us that way. Humans have always told stories. God reveals Himself to us mostly in story. God's revealed story is the truth, but it is still a story. The Holy Spirit uses this story to create a living faith in us. We can use story to share our faith as well. The best story is the story of redemption found in the Bible. There are other great stories out there as well like "A Christmas Carol" which stir our imagination and help us think about important things.

I would encourage you to tell stories to your children and grandchildren as you are able this Christmas season. Children especially love stories. And do not rely on movies if you can avoid them. Screens have a way of killing our imagination. Read and tell great stories. Tell stories about your family. Tell great stories like "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe" by C.S. Lewis. Most importantly tell the story of Jesus. Christmas is one of the best times that the story of Jesus gets out to people who do not know it. It is also a great time for us to get to know Jesus' story even better.

We are going to have a different Christmas this year because of COVID. While we may not be able to get together in person, technology provides us

with a wonderful means to see each other. And even tell stories!

I pray you have a wonderful Christmas even with all the challenges we face.

God bless you!
Pastor Maggard

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Grace Family,

The Holiday Season is upon us, and I fear it will be celebrated like no other years before. With the governor laying out the plan for how we should gather, you may not be able to spend the quantity and quality of time with your loved ones. Each one of you will have to choose how you will celebrate, and whatever you choose, be safe.

I love this time of year for the fact that we anticipate the birth of Savior and we would have been practicing for the choir cantata. It will be a little different, but the result is the same, our Lord is born. We will all get through this different and difficult time and we can trust in Him that His will be done.

God bless us all and hope for a better 2021.

In His Service,
Chuck Stringham, President

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Wednesday, December 9th

EVANGELISM

“We Can’t Stop Telling” from Portals of Prayer,
December 23, 2020

A Song of Praise. Of David. Psalm 145:1-9

- 145 I will **extol** You, my God and King,
and **bless** Your name forever and ever.
- 2 Every day I will bless You and **praise** Your name
forever and ever.
- 3 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised,
and His greatness is unsearchable.
- 4 One generation shall **commend** Your works to
another, and shall **declare** Your mighty acts.
- 5 On the glorious splendor of Your majesty,
and on Your wondrous works, I will **meditate**.
- 6 They shall **speak** of the might of Your awesome
deeds, and I will declare Your greatness.
- 7 They shall **pour forth** the fame of Your abundant
goodness and shall **sing aloud** of Your
righteousness.
- 8 The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger
and abounding in steadfast love.
- 9 The LORD is good to all, and His mercy is over
all that He has made.

David wrote Psalm 145 centuries before the angels spoke to the shepherds on the night Christ was born. Yet the verbs he used describe exactly what the shepherds did next: Extol, Bless, Praise, Commend, Declare, Meditate, Speak, Pour forth, and Sing aloud.

Seeing the Savior themselves was not enough for these men. Now they could not stop telling the Good News. They wanted others to see the Savior too. As they returned to their flocks, they told everyone they saw that they had been with Jesus. Thirty some years later, Peter and John told the Jewish Council the same thing—they had been with Jesus, and they could not stop telling the Good News about Him.



We too, have been with Jesus. Jesus comes to us in worship, in prayer, and in His Word, and in the Sacraments. We must not stop telling and sharing the message of Jesus in our lives with those around us so that they, too, may see and believe in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Fill us, Lord, with Your Holy Spirit, that we may tell others we have been with Jesus. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Kathy Holm, Chairperson

STEWARDSHIP

As we face the end of this rather unusual and trying year, I want to thank you all for your dedication to our Great Little Church and for continuing to send in your offerings.

As you can see in the Year-End financial reports, we again will close out in the black. We not only have the funds to cover our expenses, but will fulfill our tithing commitments for several other needs.

We are blessed!

Thank you,
Barbara Dellinger, Chairperson

WORSHIP

When I asked a friend how his mother was getting along, he told me that dementia had robbed her of the ability to remember a great many names and events from the past. "Even so," he added, "she can still sit down at the piano and, without sheet music, beautifully play hymns by memory."

Plato and Aristotle wrote about the helping, healing power of music 2,500 years ago. But centuries before that, the biblical record was saturated with song. We find many of the hymns in our hymnal that were written by Martin Luther.

From the first mention of Jubal, "the father of all those who play the harp and flute" (Gen. 4:21), to those who "sing the song of Moses, the servant of God and the song of the Lamb" (Rev. 15:3), the pages of the Bible resonate with music. The Psalms, often called "the Bible's songbook," point us to the love and faithfulness of God. They conclude with an unending call to worship, "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!" (Ps. 150:6)

Today we need God's ministry of music in our hearts as much as any time in history. Whatever each day brings, may the evening find us singing, "To You, O my Strength, I will sing praises; for God is my defense, my God of mercy" (59:17).

Lord, I don't know what will come this day or farther into the future, but I'm grateful that You're by my side. Grant me a spirit of praise and thanksgiving in whatever lies ahead.

Praise to God comes naturally when you count your blessings. AMEN!!

May your Christmas celebrations be blessed!

Debbie Schwartz, Chairperson

December *Baptisms*

**Trisha Cospet
Gail James
Glen James
Erin Maggard
Emily Torrance
Jonathan Torrance
Sean Villasenor**

Do you know when you were baptized?
Email - gracelutheranrialto@gmail.com

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YOUR TITHES FOR THE LORD'S WORK

OCTOBER ATTENDANCE	OFFERING		
4h	\$	6,117.51	36
11th	\$	3,930.00	27
18h	\$	3,425.00	34
25th	\$	1,660.00	29



BIRTHDAYS

3	Eleanor	Holm
7	Richard	Lowe
10	Travis	Franzen
10	Emily	Torrance
11	Pattie	Lowe
12	Luis	Del Rio
15	Barbara	Dellinger
19	Ron	Pickinpaugh
24	Joe	Guerra
24	Kurt	Wampole
25	Gloria	Reinschmidt
26	Tiffany	Izzo
30	Allan	Dellinger
30	Denise	Wallis
31	Hudson	Izzo



Thank you for remembering our “shut-ins” Margaret Dickenson, Bette Howard, Joyce McFarland, Larry Maudlin, Evelyn Smith, Ruth Spies, and Joyce Waters.

This month's added prayers– Sue Nehls' brother – Michael Schultz; Mansell Family; Bill Choske's friend – Tim and his wife, Erin; Gene Addison; Dave Hoepfel; Bill and Judi Parker-Choske; Wind, Fire, Power outage victims; Bill Choske's co-worker – Fred and his elderly mother, Joanne; Kathy Holm's cousin – Cynthia and family; Kim Pickinpaugh's sister – Kristy and her boyfriend, Tony; Dolores Smith; Gail and Randy York's friend – Gina and their granddaughter-in-law, Heather; Dale and Nancy Telizyn; Barbara Dellinger's dear friend – Pauline Johnson; Nathan Pickinpaugh; Villasenor family; Sherry Herrera's sons – Anthony and Andrew and Zach's family; Debbie Schwartz's former choir teacher – Mr. Hemstreet; Judi Parker-Choske's dear friend – Cheryl and her dad; Dolores Smith's son – Mike and his team, Tiffany Izzo's friend's husband – Cameron; Debbie Schwartz's sister – Suzzanne.

We keep in prayer: Tony Mantz and family; Dave Nehls and family; - Patty and Richard Lowe; Anthony and Tamara Mahomes; Terry Pickinpaugh Marcy and Bryan Stringham; Alma Rich's daughter – Dawn and her husband – Tom; Glen and Gail James' friend – Kathie and Glen's Aunt Jyrlene; Tamara Mahomes' friend – Andera, friend – Zenida and her best friend – Windy, Windy's son – Jayson, his wife -- Nikole and their unborn son; Mike and Betty Guinn.





IN DECEMBER TO

7th	Kevin and Laura Mitchell
22nd	Mike and Betty Guinn
23rd	Don and Judy Belter

LUKE 2 - *The Birth of Christ*

¹In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

²This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

The Shepherds and the Angels

⁸And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find

a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with whom
He is pleased!

¹⁵When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

²¹And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, He was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.



MERRY CHRISTMAS