

# Amazing Grace

December † 2021

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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,

Advent and Christmas are upon us already! I speak of Advent as "penitential." We rightly think of Lent as penitential where we feel sorrow over our sin that drove our Lord to the cross. Traditionally, Lent is accompanied with prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Generally, it seems that most of us skip right past Advent and focus on Christmas. But Advent, in itself, is worthy of focusing on as well. And it is penitential.

Advent is the expectant waiting for the coming of our Lord. It culminates in the first coming of our Lord in the manger. This obviously fills us with great joy. It is staggering to think that the creator and Lord of the universe took on our frail human flesh so that He could join us in our frailty and suffering. Christ the LORD has become Christ our brother! This is one of the greatest mysteries of the church. And it fills us with much joy that Jesus is our brother. But Jesus is so much more than our brother. He is the ruler of all creation. And He is coming again to judge both the living and the dead.

Advent is also expectant waiting for the second coming of our Lord at the end of time. He is coming in all His glory. This glory terrifies us because we are still sinners. To be sure, we are baptized, washed clean of all our sins, and have already inherited eternal life, but we still have that pesky, irritating old man still hanging around our neck. And

that rightly brings some amount of fear at the thought of our Lord returning in all His glory. On this side of glory, there is always the tension of love and fear. I love how C.S. Lewis expresses this idea in "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe."

"Aslan is a lion- the Lion, the great Lion." "Ooh" said Susan. "I'd thought he was a man. Is he- quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion"..."Safe?" said Mr Beaver ..."Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you."

Of course, Aslan is C.S. Lewis' allegory for Jesus. He makes a great point that Jesus is not safe, but He's good! This should cause us to meditate on the danger that our sin causes us. And the church has traditionally considered Advent penitential as well as Lent, even if it is not as strong a penitential season as Lent. The joy of Easter is typically stronger than the joy of Christmas. And the penitence of Lent is typically stronger than the penitence of Advent. And this is good. Traditionally, it is still okay to set aside time for prayer, fasting, and almsgiving during this season as well.

We, of course, have freedom with regard to colors used in the church. I like purple in Advent to remind us that Advent and Lent are tied together. Blue is also a fine color and from time to time we will use

blue instead of purple. Blue seems to reflect the royal return of our Lord in His glory. And this is good as well.

Spend some time this Advent meditating on the danger of sin and the wonder of our Lord coming in the flesh to defeat sin, death, and the devil for our benefit. It seems there is very little time for reflection anymore. Advent is a great time to add some distraction-free meditation on the goodness of our Lord.

May God bless you richly these Advent and Christmas seasons.

In Christ,  
*Pastor Maggard*



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Grace Family,

As we approach the end of 2021, a lot has happened that has affected our lives in terms of how we live and relate to one another. The fortunate thing that also approaches at the end of the year is the celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior Christ Jesus!

The Christmas season always brings me a renewed faith in the saving Grace of Jesus, and the knowledge that His birth means that I also live forever in the presence of God. I hope and pray that the Christmas season brings you joy and peace in our Lord's birth.

In His Service!  
*Chuck Stringham, President*

## EVANGELISM

“Love Came Down at Christmas...  
Love was Born at Christmas!”

“Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” 1John 4:11

### Sharing God's Love with Others

The Christmas season is all about Jesus and God's love for us. Our Christian faith is all about Jesus and His love for us. God's **gift of love** in Jesus is the greatest gift of all! “Like many gifts, God's gift to us can be taken for granted, selfishly consumed, or misused for our own purposes. However, along with His Son, our Father gives us His Spirit, who leads us to see in Jesus the wondrous gift He is. Receiving this gift, we realize how great our need for it is, and our eyes are opened to see others as we see ourselves, as people whom God sent a precious gift. This loving gift is all that we need and more, and God gives it to us to share.” (Portals of Prayer, December 24, 2021)

Along with the gift of love, Jesus brings peace. He brings it to us personally through the forgiveness of sins. We have peace with God when we confess our sins and are forgiven. We are at peace with God. This **gift of peace** is amplified when it is shared and it is meant to be shared. “The peace of Jesus not only unites us again with our heavenly Father, it also unites us again with one another. As we confess one Christian faith, we recognize we are also confessing that we are one body united in the bond of peace that Jesus brings among us. This is the calling we share. This is the peace we receive as a gift. This is the joy as we share the gift.” (Portals of Prayer, December 18<sup>th</sup>)

Wow! Our world desperately needs now to know the gift of love and peace that Jesus brings. We should be so overjoyed as the shepherds were on that night long ago to go and share the love and peace that Jesus brings to everyone.

Heavenly Father, Your gift of love in Jesus has met all our needs. Guide us with your spirit to joyfully share it with others and fill us with an eagerness to share the peace You have brought us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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There are several sign-up sheets in the narthex for volunteers to serve on committees for church events that include community outreach. We need at least 4 people to sign up to have a good working committee to plan these events and we need to start planning now.

These are some of the suggested events for 2022: January Chili Cook-Off, March Irish Potluck/Talent Show, July Neighborhood Barbecue, Oktoberfest/Reformation Neighborhood Celebration. Please sign up for at least one committee.

Thanks to all the people who have signed up for the Advent Soup Suppers! God Bless you all!

Kathy Holm, Evangelism

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## JESUS LOVES YOU!!

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### WORSHIP

#### Christmas Time!

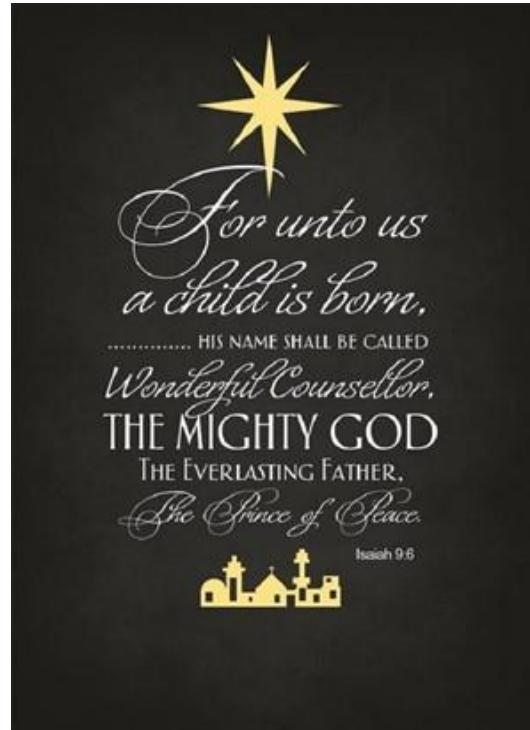
What is your favorite Christmas hymn? There are so many, that I would have a hard time just picking one.

One year when I was trying to decide what Christmas cantata that the choir would do and what would be the theme, a dear friend simply said, "The theme and story are ALWAYS the same!" Good point, right?

Some of our celebrations may differ from year to year but the story of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ coming into the world as a baby, does not change. We celebrate His birth at Christmas time,

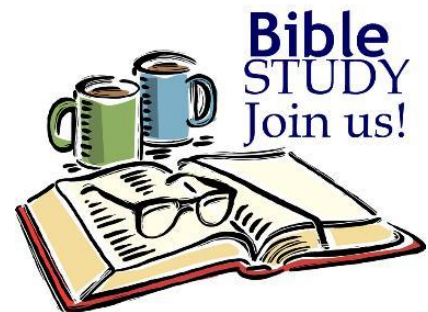
but that celebrating should be all year long. He was born and then suffered for our sins, on the cross, so that we might believe in Him and live with Him in heaven forever.

As we sing the songs of Christmas and read the Bible, may we continue to celebrate Him and what He did for us and does for us on a daily basis. Don't forget the real reason for the season!!!



Debbie Schwartz, Worship

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Our Tuesday Night Bible Study will be starting in **JANUARY!!** Please join us on *January 4<sup>th</sup>* at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday evenings at church. We will be studying the book of Hebrews.

## FLOWER CHART CHANGES

Since we no longer have fresh flowers on the altar the Flower Chart will be changing it to a **Special Mentions** chart.

This is a place for you to add special recognitions, memorials, birthdays, or anniversaries. There will be no cost for your entry to be put in the bulletin.

Please just fill out the chart as you normally would with your information. The 2022 chart will be up in December. You can also send an email to -

[gracelutheranrialto@gmail.com](mailto:gracelutheranrialto@gmail.com) or call the church office at **909-875-3163**.



### YOUR TITHES FOR THE LORD'S WORK

OCTOBER	OFFERING	ATTENDANCE
3rd	\$ 5,815.00	41
10th	\$ 1,300.00	24
17th	\$ 3,585.00	26
24th	\$ 4,600.00	32
31 <sup>st</sup>	\$ 360.00	32

# DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

3	Eleanor	Holm
7	Richard	Lowe
10	Travis	Franzen
10	Emily	Torrance
11	Patti	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



### *In December to*

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



**Thank you for remembering our “shut-ins”,** Joyce McFarland, Larry Maudlin, Gloria Reinschmidt, Evelyn Smith, Ruth Spies, Joyce Waters and Ruth Wells.

**This month’s added prayers:** Randy and Gail York; Mike and Maletta; Sue Maeer; Debbie Schwartz’s grandson- Shane and family; Debbie Schwartz’s daughter – Jamie Bartsch’s friend and her friend’s dad; Gail and Glen James, Gail and Glen James’ daughter – Sarah and her husband, Steve, expecting their first child in April; Sue Maeer’s brother – Andy; Kurt Wampole’s friend – Duane Fisher; Bill and Judi Parker-Choske’s friend – Cheryl and Cheryl’s dad; Sue Meer’s brother – Andy; Family of Jo Ann Miller since she received her crown; Christy Slattery and her father – Patrick; Barbara and Allan Dellinger; Eleanor Holm’s niece – Linda and family; Kevin Mitchell’s friend – Mike Van Hanja; Barbara Dellinger’s lifelong friend – Sue Fox and her husband, Mike; Katryn and Tony Mantz and family; Kevin Mitchell’s employee – Fred for the passing of his wife – Lynn; and unspoken prayers.

**Prayer of Thanksgiving for:** Sue Maeer’s friend – Bill.

**Keep in prayer:** Ross and Bree Ann Stringham and their unborn son; Randy and Gail York; Mike and Maletta Miller; Gail James’ cousin – Connie.

## Funny Corner

**What do gingerbread men use when they break their legs?**

→ Candy canes.



## Luke 2:8-14, ESV

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!'

