



VOICE OF GRACE

Grace Lutheran Church, Atlanta

November/December 2017

CHRISTMAS TREE SALES

By: **Greg Durgin**

It is time, once again, for the Grace Lutheran Church charity Christmas Tree sale! The volunteer sale is a Grace Lutheran Church tradition that has occurred every year for decades, save a few in the early 2000s when there were not enough congregants to pull it off. Over 100 trees will arrive after Thanksgiving. The trees will be sold by our unpaid church volunteers, with 100% of the proceeds given to Christian charities serving the neighborhood needy.

This year, the proceeds will support Stepping Stones ministry and Lutheran Services of Georgia (LSG). Stepping Stones is a fellowship of believers led by Pastor Joseph Song that serves the indigent of downtown Atlanta. Lutheran Services of Georgia provides Christian assistance to refugees who are settling in the Atlanta area. They also serve individuals with disabilities, assist with disaster relief, and provide adoption and foster care services. Both organizations have a long history with both Grace Lutheran Church and the Christmas Tree sale.

The tree sale is a distinctly Lutheran way to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus, since the modern tradition of the Christmas tree has origins in Germany during the protestant reformation. The evergreen Christmas tree symbolizes our everlasting Christ and the eternity we will enjoy with Him.

It is said that Martin Luther himself was the first to add lit candles to the trees, although our church organist and chief fire marshal, Jan Ellison, recommends against this practice. But the charity sale is also a distinctly Lutheran way to celebrate Christmas because it is the tree that is the gift, rather than the presents underneath—just as Christ, himself, is the real Christmas gift.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Because the project demands a high level of volunteers, we invite your generous participation to make the sale a success. Invite your friends and family with you to come hang out, get to know the neighbors, and support local charities!

Fresh-cut Christmas trees aren't selling like they used to, but we have a strong base of loyal customers, and we have a good reputation in the neighborhood. Besides that, we have good causes to support! We pray that as we work together on this signature project, the 2017 sale will be another success!



REFORMATION 500 DAY OF SERVICE

A big “thank you” to everyone who came out to Hurt Park on October 28 for our Reformation 500 Day of Service. Volunteers served God in worship and prayer alongside Atlanta’s homeless population, while also serving them with food and coats. This was just one of the many celebrations that weekend for the 500th anniversary of the reformation. It’s still all about Jesus!



IN OUR PRAYERS

- » **Our homebound member:** Marjorie Hunecke
- » **Continued healing:** Arlene Kateen and Jan Ellison
- » **For our mission partners:** Rev. Joseph Song, Stepping Stone, and Lutheran Services of Georgia

WEEKLY WORSHIP

- » **Children’s Sunday School, Sundays 9:45am**
- » **Adult Bible Study, Sundays 9:45am**
- » **Young Adult Class, Sundays 9:45am**
- » **Worship Service, Sundays 11am**

THE PASTOR'S CORNER

This year, we will mark the season of Advent in a very special way—by gathering around the Lord's table to receive communion each Sunday of the season. Why would we celebrate Advent by celebrating the Lord's supper? The answer is tied to what Advent is really all about.

Advent comes to us from the Latin language, and it means "coming to." With the Advent season, our hearts and minds turn to the hope that soon Christ will come to us, that he will soon come to finally overthrow the powers of sin, death, and satan. During Advent, we remember the promise that Jesus has given that he will once again come to his people and raise them all from their graves and welcome them into his Kingdom of everlasting life.

While the season of Advent has a focus on the final coming of Christ, we also remember all the ways that Jesus has come to us in the past and still comes to us in these days. With an eye to the first Advent of Christ, the season of Christmas will be more and more on our minds in these days. We will look forward to celebrating his birth in Bethlehem. We will also remember that Christ has promised to be with his people "always, unto the very end of the age." Indeed, we have not been left alone even as we wait for Christ return in his glory.

And this season, we will remember that Christ comes to us in the meal of his true body and blood. In this Eucharist meal, this meal of thanksgiving, we receive the body and blood that was given for our sins and shed for our trespasses. Jesus will come to us every Sunday to forgive us, to renew the life we have in him, and to strengthen us in faith toward God and in love toward our neighbor. So, with thankful hearts, remember this Advent that still in these days Christ comes to us with his mercy and his love as we gather our his table, and as we pray, "Come soon Lord Jesus!"

- Pastor Adam Ellsworth



2017 HOPE TREE

Grace will be participating in Lutheran Services of Georgia's (LSG) Hope Tree Program again this year. Gifts collected through the program will go to people in need, including children in foster care, children and adults with developmental disabilities, and recently resettled refugee families seeking a new life in the U.S.

Last year, donations to the LSG's Hope Tree Program provided 1,140 individuals in Georgia with toys, clothing, coats, and blankets who might otherwise not have received a gift.

More information about the Hope Tree Program will be announced in the coming weeks. Be ready to grab an "ornament" off the tree and be a blessing to someone in need this Christmas season!

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

December's Piety by the Pint event on Thursday, December 21, will be combined with Christmas caroling.

We will start with a quick practice of a few hymns at the church at 6:30pm and will proceed to carol at homes and pubs in the neighborhood at 7:00pm. We will finish the evening with a pint at a nearby pub.

Bring your friends and family—the more, the merrier!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Second Sunday Lunch, November 12

Join us after the service for fellowship and lunch at Pure Taqueria (300 N Highland Ave).

Thanksgiving Lunch, November 19

Join us after the service for our annual Thanksgiving lunch. Members can find the sign-up sheet outside the sanctuary to volunteer to bring sides, desserts, and beverages.

Christmas Trees Arrive, November 25

Volunteers are needed to help unload the Christmas trees at Grace. More details to come.

First Sunday Oatmeal Breakfast, December 3, 9:45am

Voters' Meeting, December 3

After the service, we will gather for a voters' meeting. Pizza will be served for lunch.

Advent/Christmas Decorating, December 10

Immediately following the service, we will be decorating the church for Advent/Christmas.

Christmas Party, December 16, 5:30pm

Join us for a potluck style dinner. Members can bring a side dish or a dessert to share. Also bring a wrapped white elephant gift, which is a small inexpensive gift or item from your own house that is no longer being used and could be a gift for someone else! Bring one white elephant gift per person attending, including a children's gift for all children attending.

Piety by the Pint / Christmas Caroling, December 21, 6:30pm

December's Piety by the Pint event will be combined with Christmas caroling. We will start with a quick practice of a few hymns at church at 6:30pm and will proceed to carol at homes and pubs in the neighborhood at 7:00pm. We will finish the evening with a pint at a nearby pub.

ADVENT SUPPERS

During Advent, we will gather together for supper before each Wednesday evening service. Supper will be served at 6pm, and the service will start at 7pm.

Wednesday evening suppers/services will be on December 6, 13, and 20.

SERVICE ASSISTANTS

- » **11/5:** John and Arlene Kateen (Altar Care), Adam Ozgo and Lee Anderson (Ushers), Lucien Lane (Worship Assistant)
- » **11/12:** Jason Howells and Thurston Howells (Ushers), Patrick Kane (Reader)
- » **11/19:** Sheila O'Kane and Sarah Hocut (Altar Care), Bob and Mary Chambers (Ushers), Chad Wilson (Worship Assistant)
- » **11/26:** John Kateen and Don Collins (Ushers), Jonathan Plowman (Reader)
- » **12/3:** Kelley Wiedenmann and Blaire Wilson (Altar Care), Adam Ozgo and Lee Anderson (Ushers), Jose Beaton (Worship Assistant)
- » **12/10:** James and Karleen Smith (Altar Care), Mal Simpson and Zack Simpson (Ushers), Don Collins (Worship Assistant)
- » **12/17:** John and Arlene Kateen (Altar Care), Chad Wilson (Worship Assistant), Bob and Mary Chambers (Ushers)
- » **12/24 (11am):** Sarah Hocut and Sheila O'Kane (Altar Care), Lucien Lane (Worship Assistant), Adam Ozgo and Lee Anderson (Ushers)
- » **12/24 (7pm):** Jose Beaton (Worship Assistant), Lee Anderson and Don Collins (Ushers)
- » **12/25:** Kelley Wiedenmann and Blaire Wilson (Altar Care), Jose Beaton (Worship Assistant), Lee Anderson and John Kateen (Ushers)
- » **12/31:** Jeff Raymond (Reader), Lee Anderson and Don Collins (Ushers)

WEEK AT GRACE

- » **Mondays: Nicotine Anonymous, 7pm**
- » **Tuesdays: Yoga Exercise Class, 6pm**
- » **Wednesdays: Supper and Bible Study, 6pm**
- » **Thursdays: Alcoholics Anonymous, 7pm**
- » **Saturdays: Yoga Exercise Class, 10am**

CONTACT US

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