



Amazing Grace
LUTHERAN CHURCH

DECEMBER 2016 NEWSLETTER

Senior Pastor Scott Seeke
3305 Lawrenceville Highway
Lawrenceville, GA 30044
770-381-1293 www.tisgrace.org



Worship Sundays @ 8:30 am & 11:00 am
Sunday School Hour, Sundays @ 10 am
Wednesdays: Homework Help @ 5 pm
Worship @ 7 pm



Advent Wednesday Evening Worship

During Advent, Midweek Grace will be Holden Evening Prayer.

The dates in December are **Wednesdays December 7th, 14th, and 21st @ 7 pm.**

Please join us!

Join Us for Christmas Eve Worship!

Please join us on **Saturday, December 24th**, as we celebrate the exciting arrival of the Birth of Jesus! We offer traditional candlelight worship services on **Saturday, December 24th @ 5 pm and 10 pm.**

Children are welcome at both worship services. This year we will also be offering Communion at both worship services!



Christmas Day Worship

This year we will also be offering one worship service on Christmas Day, **Sunday, December 25 @ 10 am.**

Please join us to celebrate Jesus's Birthday!



Christmas Brunch

All women are invited to a Christmas Brunch and ornament exchange on **Wednesday, December 7 @ 11:30 am @ Jackie Rager's house.**

Please bring your favorite brunch item to share and one new or gently used wrapped

ornament for the exchange. Beverages will be provided.

Christmas Decorating

The date for the Decorating of the Sanctuary will be on **Saturday, December 3rd @ 10 am.** We can use both men and women to make this fun and fast! All are welcome.

Thank you for your service! Altar Guild



Choir Cantata

You are invited to "A Gospel Mass for Advent", a special cantata featuring the Sanctuary Choir and a Jazz Band.

Sunday, December 11 @ the 11 am worship service!

Please invite your family & friends for this special event!



Congregational Meeting

December Meeting

The semi-annual Congregational meeting is scheduled for **Sunday, December 11**, after the 11:00 Cantata service.

At this meeting, we will discuss and approve the 2017 budget as well as install the Strategic Planning Committee, and begin developing a vision for the future of Amazing Grace and start discussing how we might attain that vision.

Blood Drive

The Life south bloodmobile will be on Amazing Grace's grounds on **Sunday, December 4 from 9 am - 1 pm** accepting donations.

Thank you for considering a donation to help those who are in need of blood.



Men's Retreat



MEN'S RETREAT

The men's retreat at Lutheranch will be held on the weekend of **Jan. 27-29, 2017**. Mark your calendars and reserve the weekend for a time of food, fellowship, and worship.

Pastor Tom Kenny will be joining us

to lead a Bible Study on Sat. and worship on Sun. There is hiking, fishing, playing games, and food. The cost of the retreat will be \$70 again this year. There is space for 25 men. **Thank you for those who have already signed up.** This is a laid back weekend, and a time of fellowship and relaxation. Please plan to join the men of Amazing Grace for this retreat. If you have any questions, just ask around and you will find someone who can fill you in on the retreat.

Order Your Poinsettias for the Sanctuary



I/We wish to donate a Christmas Poinsettia at a cost of **\$15** per plant, which will adorn the chancel area for the Christmas Eve services, to the Glory of God and:

In Memory of:

In Honor of:

Given by: _____

(Please Print)

Of plants: _____

Total Amount: \$ _____

Place the form either in the offering plate or turn it in to the church office. Checks should be made payable to: **“Amazing Grace Lutheran Church”, earmarked “Poinsettias”**.

Poinsettias can be picked up after the 10:00 p.m. Christmas Eve’s service on December 24th.

THE DEADLINE TO ORDER IS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18th!

The Lawrenceville Cooperative Ministry Food Bank

I am not sure if many of you heard that the Director of the Lawrenceville Cooperative Ministry is readying to retire very soon! Linda Freund has put many years at several different locations into the Coop Ministry Food Bank! I do not know how many years Bob and I have been involved, but it is one of the Blessings we have found for our spare time in retirement!

I personally do not know who Linda's replacement will be, but I am sure he/she will be putting his/her own spin on the way things are run at the Coop!

It does not matter who is in charge of the Coop, it is about the people who come in every time the Coop is opened to help people! Amazing Grace has done its share of contributions in the past and I am praying that things will continue and even make us more aware of our neighbors needs in the future!

Lately, I have been asking for vegetable soups of all kinds! I made a point to look at all the vegetable soups in the Walmart where I shop! Oh, My, Goodness...there was many more vegetable soups than I thought possible! I got one of each kind that was stocked and that count was 9 cans. There were several kinds not stocked the day I shopped, but I am making plans to hit more than one Walmart to see how many cans I can locate! I think I will wait until after Christmas for this adventure! But, I enjoyed finding those nine different kinds of soups and Bob's taking them to the Coop with 30 other personal care items! There are more things in the closet, but they will be included next month and the count reported in the next newsletter!

With Christmas coming up, we might want to bring in anything that is eaten at a Christmas dinner! Canned sweet Potatoes, cranberry, stuffing mixes, cans of green beans, or anything else you might use at your Christmas dinner at home! AND pick up some veggies soups too! There is also a need for children's breakfast and lunch items for that long winter break from school! Keep that in mind and please consider some breakfast foods and lunch foods as well!

Thank you, Amazing Grace, for sharing yourselves with our neighbors who might need a little help! Every little can of soup and package of grits or oatmeal help our neighbors and their families get through one week of a hungry month for their families!

The volunteers are a Blessing to the Food Bank! If you would like to volunteer, there is training every other month! If you would like to attend the next scheduled Volunteer Orientation, it will be held on Thursday, December 15, at 7:00 p.m. at the Lawrenceville Cooperative Ministry Food Bank located at 176 Church Street, Lawrenceville, Georgia 30046. This is located right behind the Lawrenceville City Hall Building! All are welcome! Everyone has a Gift from God! Come and see if God is calling you to use a gift He has given you!

God's Blessings to everyone for a very Merry Christmas and a Great New Year!
Linda MacKinnon



NEWS TODAY



Work Day at Amazing Grace

Please join us on **Saturday December 3rd at 9:00 am until ???**. Lunch will be provided.

Projects include trim shrubs, spread pine straw, clean gutters, install bulletin boards in Fellowship Hall for Sunday School, paint and any other things that need to be done. We will need someone with a truck to pick up the pine straw.

Volunteers Requested

Every Wednesday from 5 – 7 pm, the Fellowship Hall is bursting with neighborhood children.

Here's how you can become involved: tutor a child or volunteer for non-tutoring positions!

- Greeters and Shepherds, someone to organize our library, someone to build and maintain k-8

worksheets file, clean-up and setup, etc. If you are interested, please attend Homework Help on Wednesdays @ 5 pm and see Kristen Silveus.



New Year's Day Worship

We will have one worship service on **Sunday, January 1 2017**, New Year's Day! at 10 am.

Please join us for our first worship service in 2017!



SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PARTY

Sunday, December 11

10:00 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.

In The Fellowship Hall

Help NEEDED!!

Please Contact Becky O'Brian or Kristen Silveus for more information



"Box Tops for Education" and Campbell Soup "Labels for Education"

Hi, Amazing Grace,

In the November Newsletter I mentioned the "Box Tops for Education" found on cereal boxes and other products as well as the Campbell Soup "Labels for Education." I am not sure if anyone has brought any of these labels to give to Liz Linke to help her school receive teaching aids or not, but I would like to remind you once again about the Win-Win situation by our cutting out these labels and bringing them to Amazing Grace for Liz Linke's school, Fort Daniel Elementary!

These coupons are worth ten cents apiece to help buy educational supplies that will help students and teachers both benefit in the programs at Fort Daniel!

And once you cut off the coupons, you can recycle the cans and cardboard to help our environment!

I have just recently noticed that some of the Campbell Soups no longer carry the Labels for Education! I am not sure what is happening there, but please look and purchase the cans and cereals that do have these labels on them! Be sure to cut them off and bring them to church for Liz's school!

We are doing a school a real service if we help them acquire more educational materials!

Thank you for supporting Fort Daniel Elementary with your box tops and labels!

Linda MacKinnon





Angel Tree

The Angel Tree is in the Narthex, and only a few gifts remain!

This year we are sponsoring children from 14 families from Chesney Elementary School, all of which are homeless.

We are also sponsoring children from Homework Help, some of whom will not otherwise receive a gift.

Please choose a gift tag and return the wrapped gift, along with the tag, **by December 13th to the Narthex.** Please contact Kathy Berfield (678) 662-7546, or Judie Lee (770) 662-8226 with questions.



Retirement Party

Linda Freund is retiring from the directorship of the co-op effective December 31, 2016. A celebration of her impact on the people of Lawrenceville and Dacula and a send-off to her next phase of life will be held on **Sunday, December 11, from 1 to 4 PM** at 550 Trackside (550 Clayton Street, Lawrenceville 30045). Please feel free to write a note to Linda and bring it to the celebration, or if you can't attend, send it to her at the Co-op, 176 Church St, Lawrenceville, GA 30046.

We hope you can join us that afternoon to wish her well. Your presence is the best gift of all!

Lawrenceville Co-operative Ministry Board of Directors
Thank You!



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READY OR NOT?

When Christmas is in the air, it's easy to get caught up in the holiday spirit. We jam-pack our schedules—planning family gatherings, decorating and going shopping. In our busyness, we often ask each other, "Are you ready for Christmas?"

What if we asked ourselves (and others) a similar question from a different point of view? Something more like: "How am I preparing for the arrival of Jesus?" This question encourages us to consider what we can do during the Christmas season to celebrate the birth of Christ.

Five pastors started a project called the Advent Conspiracy (AdventConspiracy.org) to encourage their faith communities to focus on the arrival of Jesus rather than exchanging gifts. Here's what they came up with:

Worship fully: It's the season to lay our burdens down and lift up God's greatness through passionate praise and worship. Psalm 150 encourages us to praise God however we'd like—with our voices, a trumpet, cymbals or by dancing. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!

Spend less: Spending less doesn't mean to stop giving gifts! But if spending outside of our budget goes on a credit card, the joy of giving ends up being a burden of debt. By setting limits and spending wisely, we'll have more money to give later.

Give more: The best things in life are free. Instead of buying someone a gift, perhaps the best thing we can give someone is our time and attention. For you, this may look like planning a date night or spending time on the floor playing a board game with your kids. Your presence is much more valuable than presents.

Love all: Love is the ultimate gift that we are free to give and to receive. If we don't go overboard on holiday spending, we can use our funds to contribute to causes that help us show the love of Jesus in life-changing ways.

Worshipping fully, spending less, giving more and loving all will help remind us of the true meaning of Christmas: That Jesus is the reason for the season!

This article provided compliments of Thrivent Financial, Don Goldsmith, ChFC®, RICP®, FIC and Kelly Goldsmith, CFP®, CASL®, CLTC®, FIC at 770-982-0420 or eastmetroteam@thrivent.com. 28451NQ N7-16

In Attendance: Pastor Scott, John Ferguson, David Rager, Debbie Teal, Trish Ladd-Thomas, Bob MacKinnon, Elaine Schwartz, Liz Linke, Mimi Layton
Guests: Angie Rhilinger
Absent: Phillip Speddon, Bob Lee
Opening devotional: Pastor Scott
Spiritual Autobiography: Debbie Teal

Secretary's Minutes: The minutes from October's council meeting were approved through email on October 24 2016.

Combined Treasurer and Financial Administrator's Report for October:

October 2016 regular giving was \$17,005.01, plus Rental Income \$80.00, for a total of \$17,085.01, which is \$2,294.16 under budget. **Expenses were** \$18,515.24, which was \$170.10 under budget.

October 2016 YTD Income was \$10,083.92 more than October 2015 YTD Income.

October 2016 YTD Expenses were \$44,716.56 more than October 2015 YTD Expenses.

2016 Year to Date Giving/Income is \$1,235.67 over budget.

2016 Year to Date Expenses are \$9,187.28 under budget.

Dedicated Accounts – We have a balance of \$38,136.39 in various accounts, which includes October 2016 receipts of \$3,053.00 (i.e. \$2,313 for Palma family) and expenses of \$237.70. Balance of Old Capital Campaign Dedicated Account, which is included in above balance equals \$2,584.88.

October 2016 cash on hand is \$109,256.03, which includes \$38,136.39 Dedicated; therefore, not in reserve/not liquid for general expenses.

A motion was made by John Ferguson and seconded by Trish Ladd-Thomas to accept the report, and the motion carried.

Pastor's Report for November

Membership Changes

This Membership Inquiry group was smaller than expected due to the Wulver Palma's injury and the language difficulties involved in having a program for Spanish speakers with poor English. New members are Louise Radloff, Ramaish Bidessy, and Jeanette Kuldip. It is worth noting that Louise Radloff joined during the 8:30 worship, which I understand hasn't happened in a while.

Midweek Grace

Attendance has declined to an average of 15. It has been well over a month since any of our Homework Help parents have come, though several children have attended.

Tuesday Bible Study

The Monday Bible Study is now the Tuesday Bible Study. It meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month, 3:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. The hope is that this time will lead to increased

attendance among those who cannot drive at night.

Faith Community Network

They are willing to move forward without us needing a Liaison who goes through the training. I will arrange a date.

HR Committee

Is presenting the Employee Manual tonight for council review and vote.

Safe Gatherings Update

No new people have taken it.

Sign Ministry

Still looking for someone to serve in this ministry.

Youth Ministry

The youth ministry is strong. The kids are meeting three times a month: once to serve God, another to serve their neighbors, and then to enjoy one another. They also led worship on Youth Sunday and hosted other churches for Youth Worship Night on Nov. 13.

Car and Meal Allowance

I request that a portion of my salary be designated as Car Allowance, and another portion as Meal Allowance. This does not change my paycheck, nor does it change the church budget or expenses. All that changes is my W2 and the tax ramifications for me (which does not involve the church). I ask that \$3000 car allowance and \$1000 in meal allowance be authorized by council, effective immediately and going forward. All that is required is a recorded council vote.

A motion to approve allocations to Pastor's salary to reflect \$3000 car allowance and \$1000 in meal allowance made by Elaine Schwartz and seconded by Trish Ladd Thomas and the motion carried.

Vacation Time

I will be here Sunday Nov. 20, leaving the day after for vacation Thanksgiving week. Eduardo Hernandez will preach Nov. 27. I will return to the office for Monday Nov. 28, then be gone for the remainder of the week, returning for worship on Dec. 4. This leaves me with one vacation Sunday (which I will not be using) and two days off, which I may use between Christmas and New Years.

A motion was made by Liz Linke and seconded by John Ferguson to accept the Pastor's report, and the motion carried.

COMMISSION REPORTS

Nurture – Phillip Speddon

Thanksgiving dinner is on Saturday November 19 2016 at 6:00 pm.

Discipleship – John Ferguson

Youth service was held on Sunday November 13 and was quite a success!

Adult Sunday School has been moved to the back room in the fellowship hall, and **children's Sunday school** has been moved into the main area of the fellowship hall. It has been suggested that the **Confirmation class** be moved into the Youth room with the Nomads.

Outreach – Bob MacKinnon

We will be holding a **blood drive** on Dec. 4th 9:00-1:00. In Oct. we had several new donors and a really good turnout. I hope we can have as good or better response in Dec.

Out of Darkness Walk—AGLC had 13 participants and raised over \$1000.

Homework Help—Community response continues to grow. Since Pastor Scott went to Bethesda Elementary and talked about our program we have picked up several new families. More volunteers are always needed.

Angel Tree—Plans are under way to have the Angel Tree in the narthex this weekend. Kathy Berfield will again be coordinating for this project. Chesnee Elementary is the school we will be working with this year.

Family Promise—I hope to have someone from Family Promise come and talk to the congregation after the first of the year.

SaltLight Women's Center—I would like to see us do another PJs & Robes drive in Jan. 2017. A question has been raised about donating clothing to the women's center. We are going to check with people who administer this ministry to see if that is something they would be interested in.

Worship & Music – Trish Ladd-Thomas

We have some jam-packed, wonderful Sunday services this month!

We invited three new members into our congregation this past Sunday, and then our Youth led their first Youth led their first Youth Worship that afternoon.

We invited members of Christ the Lord Lutheran Church, and we had over 60 people attend. The Youth did a remarkable job, and the Offering received was completely donated to the Palma family.

For reformation Sunday, October 30th, we had our very own brass quintet play. Many thanks to Angie Rhilinger, Bob Schwartz, and DJ, Madelyn, and Trish Ladd-Thomas.

On Sunday, October 9th, the youth led the Sunday Worship service while Pastor Scott was out of town. We had several members comment on how much they enjoyed the service, and also how well the youth did. We would like to institute this practice for some of the Sundays that Pastor will not be available. We may also use the Youth for the fifth Sunday of those months; this would help involve the youth in service to the Congregation, and also assist in our need for hospitality. The Youth will lead service on Sunday January 29, 2017, as Pastor will be away at the Men's Retreat.

For December, we will have the Cantata on the 11th, with the possibility of our Youth playing Hand bells.

Property – David Rager

The power to the sanitary sewer pump has been repaired and alarm hooked back up.

Scheduling work day for December 3rd.

Door closer on the two exterior doors at Fellowship Hall replaced. Door stop on rear exterior door at Fellowship Hall replaced.

Faucet in Kitchen tightened.

Door latch at Nursery Room fixed so door can be locked.

Application submitted to replace the parking lot lights. Georgia Power rep indicated that it can take up to 10 weeks for install, based upon lead time for material.

A motion to accept the commission reports was made by Debbie Teal and seconded by Bob MacKinnon and the motion carried.

New Business

- **Pastor's Review** – Council has met to discuss Pastor Scott's review, and Elaine Schwartz, Debbie Teal, and Mimi Layton will meet with Pastor Scott on Sunday December 4 to go over his self-review.
- **Lent 2017** – we will set up a meeting for beginning of January to plan for the season of Lent.
- **Presiding Bishop Eaton** has asked that all ELCA churches study the Catechism during Lent.
- **Amazing Grace 2022/Strategic Planning.**

AGLC 2016		AGLC 2022	
33% families w/kids	50 ppl/15 families	66% families w/kids	150 ppl/ 40 families
66% age 50+	100 ppl/60 families	33% age 50+	100 ppl/60 families
200K budget	3-4% stewardship	300K budget	3-4% stewardship
100 ppl in worship		150 ppl in worship	

25 families will work out to be 5 new families per year

- *A motion to approve Pastor presenting the above table to congregation at the semi-annual meeting on December 11 2016 made by Trish Ladd-Thomas and seconded by Debbie Teal, and the motion carried.*
- **LutheRanch/Novus Way** – they want to come and present to the council about the ministries available, sometime between now and April.

Old Business

- **Nursery Staffing** – Tabled until December as there is no new info to report.

- **Employee Manual from HR** – motion to approve manual with changes denoted by council made by Elaine Schwartz and seconded by Trish Ladd-Thomas, and the motion carried.
- **HOST** – From Chairman Rudy Beilfuss: We have a Hispanic Outreach Leadership Team (HOST) that is developing recommendations on how the church can better integrate the Hispanic Community into the Amazing Grace family. We are going well beyond Homework Help. As Chairman of the Hispanic Outreach Leadership Team I would like to make sure we have the commitment of the church going forward. I would like the Church Council to authorize the Hispanic Outreach Strategy Team to spend up to \$ 1,000 of the St. James money on items HOST approves. It may be for language instruction, materials, supplies, books, bookcases, and other items yet to be identified.
- *Motion to approve up to \$1000.00 of the "St. James Money" to be allocated for HOST made by Trish Ladd-Thomas and seconded by Bob MacKinnon, and the motion carried.*
- **Capital Campaign Committee** – Candidate suggestions to head up campaign/be on committee –Committee would start after the first of the year. Council members will speak with prospective members and request that they give us an answer before the December council meeting. Council will create a prioritized list at the December meeting and provide to the Committee to use when they meet in January.
- **Congregational Meeting December 11 2016** after the 11:00 service to discuss and approve 2017 budget, install various committees, elect a nominating committee (open council positions: Vice President, Outreach, Nurture, Worship & Music, Financial Administrator), reappoint the audit committee.
- **Budget** – looking forward, we will not be able to budget for staff salary increases for 2017.

Thank You's

- Rick Ford of KLF Consulting who fixed the power to the sanitary sewer pump at no charge.
- Bob Mackinnon for hooking up the alarm for the sanitary sewer pump.
- David Berfield for replacing door closers and door stop.
- Parry Moss for fixing faucet and door latch.
- Jimmy Herchek for moving the TV into the back room of the fellowship hall, and for all his hard work with the Stewardship campaign.
- Everyone who helped make the Palma BBQ fundraiser possible.
- Reformation Brass Quintet: Angie Rhilinger, Bob Schwartz, and DJ, Madelyn, and Trish Ladd-Thomas.
- Homework Help mamas for cleaning out the back room of the fellowship hall
- Youth for planning and pulling off an awesome youth worship.
- Connie Ferguson for helping with youth worship.
- Alleluia Girls and friends for election day cookies and treats.
- Conor Marzec for helping to replace can lights in the choir loft.
- All those who went to serenade John Ferguson's mother in Hospice.
- HR Committee for all their hard work over the last year.

Spiritual Autobiography for next month: Bob Lee
Closing Prayer

Motion to adjourn was made by Debbie Teal and seconded by Trish Ladd-Thomas and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by Liz Linke.

December

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 7 pm Men's Barnabas Group; 7:30 pm NA Group	2	3 9 am Work Day; 10 am Christmas Decorating
4 8:30 am Worship Service; 9am– 1am Blood Drive; 10 am Sunday School Hour; 11 am Worship Service	5 6:30 pm Peachtree Trombone Consort; 7pm Prayer Discernment Group	6 10:30 am Staff Meeting; 11 am Good Old Guys Meet; 7pm Jazz Band	7 11:30 am Christmas Brunch @ Jackie's House 5 pm , 5 pm Home- work Help; 7 pm Midweek Grace	8 7 pm Men's Barnabas Group; 7:30 pm NA Group	9	10
11 8:30 am Worship Service; 10 am Sunday School Hour & Children's Party ; 11 am Canta- ta Service; After 11 am service: semi- annual meeting ; 1 pm Linda Freund's Retirement Party	12 6:30 pm Peachtree Trombone Consort	13 11 am Good Old Guys Meet; 3:30 Bible Study; 7pm Council Meeting	14 9:30 Alleluia Girls 5 pm Homework Help; 7 pm Midweek Grace	15 7 pm Men's Barnabas Group; 7:30 pm NA Group	16	17
18 8:30 am Worship Service; 10 am Sun- day School Hour; 11 am Worship Service	19 6:30 pm Peachtree Trombone Consort; 7pm Prayer Discernment Group	20 10:30 am Staff Meeting; 11 am Good Old Guys Meet	21 9:30 Alleluia Girls 5 pm Homework Help; 7 pm Midweek Grace	22 7 pm Men's Barnabas Group; 7:30 pm NA Group	23	24 5 pm Christmas Eve Worship 10 pm Christmas Eve Worship
25 10 am Christmas Worship	26 6:30 pm Peachtree Trombone Consort	27 11 am Good Old Guys Meet; 3:30 Bible Study	28 9:30 Alleluia Girls 5 pm Homework Help; 7 pm Midweek Grace	29 7 pm Men's Barnabas Group; 7:30 pm NA Group	30	31