



The Grace Vine

December 2023

Rector's Writ

It's hard to believe Christmas is less than a month away. We know those brief days will go quickly, and Christmas will arrive whether we've had time to get ready or not. It's nice that each new church year begins with the season of Advent, the four Sundays prior to Christmas. In spite of all the busyness that goes with this time of year, Advent reminds us to keep our hearts focused on the Lord. We're to 'keep awake.' The life we live and the choices we make are to be about trusting in, committing ourselves to abide in God's loving grace, Christ's ways and teachings, and the Holy Spirit's guiding, wise presence. The Collect for 1 Advent has a now and future focus and reads:

"Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen."

Advent helps us to remember and hold fast to the true meaning of Christmas, to celebrate and give thanks to God for the birth of his Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Jesus teaches us the Father's love and mercy. He shows us how we're to love God and one another, being led by his ways in this earthly life, so that we may have eternal life with God in heaven. As the Collect for the first Sunday after Christmas reads: "Almighty God, you have poured upon us the new light of your incarnate Word: Grant that this light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen."

These are just a few aspects of Advent and Christmas. We know there are also those mysterious and wonder-filled aspects, and I hope we all keep our hearts open to such moments. Worshiping, serving, praying, and singing together as Jesus' family (especially on Christmas Eve) gives us opportunities to experience mysterious and meaningful moments, and we thank God for those. Please be sure to invite your family and friends to attend the Christmas Eve or Christmas Day services with you. May we celebrate the peace, joy, and love God gives us in his Son our Savior. May we be grateful and filled with wonder for such blessings, in these holy seasons and always.

A blessed Advent and Christmas to you and those you love.

Carol+



Service and Lay Ministry Schedule

If you cannot serve when scheduled, please find a substitute and call the parish office with that person's name. Thank you for sharing in the liturgical ministry of Grace Church.

Sunday, December 3		8:00 & 10:00 AM Holy Eucharist		Advent 1
Celebrant	The Rev. Carol Evans	1st Reading	Isaiah 64:1-9	
Preaching	Richard Taylor	Psalm	80:1-7, 16-18	
Lectors	8am Bette Brooks 10am Fred Lundgren	2nd Reading	1 Corinthians 1:3-9	
Greeters	Fred & Nancy Lundgren	Gospel	Mark 13:24-37	
Altar Guild	Cathy Potisuk & Laurie Barney			
Coffee Hosts	8am Joan & Frank Seman 10am Mary Jean & John McDonald			
Counters	Kay Wise & Kingsland Pretorius			

Sunday, December 10		8:00 & 10:00 AM Holy Eucharist		Advent 2
Celebrant	The Rev. Carol Evans	1st Reading	Isaiah 40:1-11	
Lectors	8am Bette Brooks 10am Tim Splinter	Psalm	85:1-2, 8-13	
Greeters	Barb Popiel	2nd Reading	2 Peter 3:8-15a	
Altar Guild	Cathy Potisuk & Laurie Barney	Gospel	Mark 1:1-8	
Coffee Hosts	8am Shirley & Mike Johnson 10am Nancy Ervin & Cindy Hoskins			
Counters	Kay Wise & Kingsland Pretorius			

Sunday, December 17		8:00 & 10:00 AM Holy Eucharist		Advent 3
		Greening of the Church		
Celebrant	The Rev. Carol Evans	1st Reading	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11	
Lectors	8am Bette Brooks 10am Jeff & Martha Croll	Psalm	126	
Greeters	John & Mary Jean McDonald	2nd Reading	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24	
Altar Guild	Cathy Potisuk & Laurie Barney	Gospel	John 1:6-8, 19-28	
Coffee Hosts	8am TBA 10am Hot dog and chili lunch Hospitality group			
Counters	Midge Myers & Kingsland Pretorius			

Advent & Christmas Services & Fellowship

4 Sundays of Advent 8am & 10am Holy Eucharist
December 3rd, 10th, 17th, and 24th

Saturday, December 9th **Advent Quiet Day**
9am—noon with Holy Eucharist at 11:30am

December 17th (after 10am service)
Church Greening & Chili Lunch

December 24th **Christmas Eve Eucharist** at 10:30pm
Carols & Anthems at 10pm

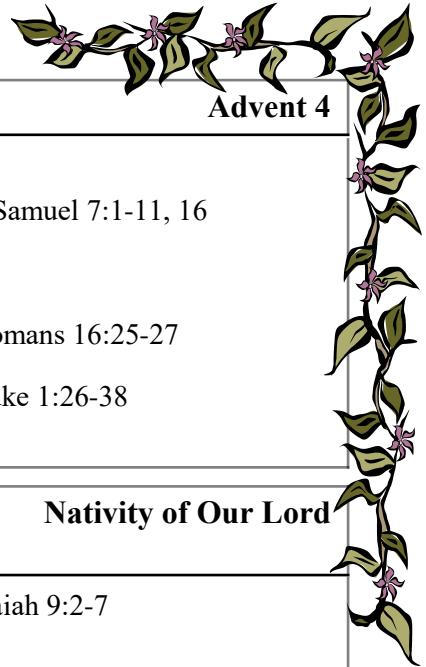
December 25th

Christmas Day Quiet Eucharist at 10am

Greening of the Church & Chili Lunch

Please plan on helping with the Greening on Sunday, December 17th following the 10:00 service. This is a parish wide event and many hands will make light work for all. Due to Advent IV coinciding with Christmas Eve, we will do some of the decorating a week early. The final touches will be added after the 10:00am service on December 24th. There will be a sign up sheet in the Parish Hall for chili makers.

**Please note, we will not have the new stove by then, so chili needs to be in a crockpot.



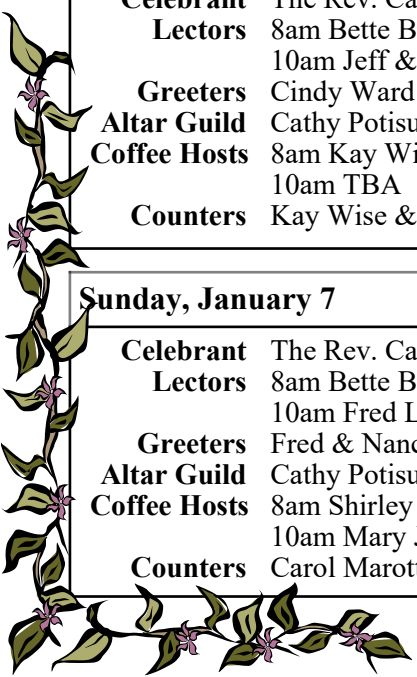
Sunday, December 24		8:00 & 10:00 AM Holy Eucharist	Advent 4
Celebrant	The Rev. Carol Evans	1st Reading	2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Lectors	8am Bette Brooks 10am Maryjane Furrer	Psalm	15
Greeters	Jeff & Lisa Marsh	2nd Reading	Romans 16:25-27
Altar Guild	Cathy Potisuk & Laurie Barney	Gospel	Luke 1:26-38
Coffee Hosts	8am TBA 10am Hot dog and chili lunch Hospitality group		
Counters	Kay Wise & Kingsland Pretorius		

Sunday, December 24		10:00 PM Carols & Anthems	Nativity of Our Lord
		10:30 PM Solemn Holy Eucharist	
Celebrant	The Rev. Carol Evans	1st Reading	Isaiah 9:2-7
Lector	Tim Splinter	Psalm	96
Greeters	Fred & Nancy Lundgren	2nd Reading	Titus 2:11-14
Altar Guild	Cathy Potisuk & Laurie Barney	Gospel	Luke 2:1-20
Counters	Kay Wise & Kingsland Pretorius		

Monday, December 25		10:00 AM Holy Eucharist	Christmas Day
Celebrant	The Rev. Carol Evans	1st Reading	Isaiah 62:6-12
		Psalm	97
		2nd Reading	Titus 3:4-7
		Gospel	Luke 2:1-20

Sunday, December 31		8:00 & 10:00 AM Holy Eucharist	1 Christmas
Celebrant	The Rev. Carol Evans	1st Reading	Isaiah 61:10—62:3
Lectors	8am Bette Brooks 10am Jeff & Martha Croll	Psalm	147
Greeters	Cindy Ward & Jameson Patrick	2nd Reading	Galatians 3:23-25; 4:4-7
Altar Guild	Cathy Potisuk & Laurie Barney	Gospel	John 1:1-18
Coffee Hosts	8am Kay Wise 10am TBA		
Counters	Kay Wise & Kingsland Pretorius		

Sunday, January 7		8:00 & 10:00 AM Holy Eucharist	1 Epiphany
Celebrant	The Rev. Carol Evans	1st Reading	Genesis 1:1-5
Lectors	8am Bette Brooks 10am Fred Lundgen	Psalm	29
Greeters	Fred & Nancy Lundgren	2nd Reading	Acts 19:1-7
Altar Guild	Cathy Potisuk & Laurie Barney	Gospel	Mark 1:4-11
Coffee Hosts	8am Shirley Johnson & Bette Brooks 10am Mary Jean & John McDonald		
Counters	Carol Marotta & Midge Myers		





Did You Know?...



We had a beautiful fall season this year, the colors were fabulous. **Susan Wyatt, Mike & Shirley Johnson's daughter**, was visiting from California and she mentioned that it had been years since she's been in Ohio in the fall and she had forgotten how beautiful it is. Those of us who live here know that all those beautiful leaves fall and then the clean-up begins! Some of our members are already 'getting out of Dodge.' We already had a nice snowfall several weeks ago. We hope those leaving for warmer parts of the country have a wonderful holiday, and we'll see you in the spring.

The Diocesan Convention took place in Wooster at Greystone Center this year. Our thanks to **Barb Popiel, Laurie Barney, and Kay Wise** for taking time out of their busy schedules to represent Grace Church as delegates, and to Kay's husband, **Ralph**, who drove the group. While the ladies participated in the Convention business, voting, and got to hear Bishop Anne Jolly's Episcopal Address, Ralph visited some of his favorite hardware shops around Wooster. (**Rev. Carol** joined the business session via VIMEO, provided by the diocese.) Thanks to **Laurie Barney** for providing a summary for us on November 12th.

Carol Marotta & her sister Gail Richards, along with several friends and other relatives, six in all, went on a Caribbean cruise. Gail is now sporting a very nice tan, and she reports they all had a wonderful time together. Sounds like good company, good food, and fun!

Barb Popiel enjoyed the time she spent with daughter **Michelle** and son-in-law **Dave**, but the real joy was being with granddaughter **Hanna**. Barb sent so many great pictures on Facebook of all the fun they had together. I'll bet Hanna can't wait until Grandma's next visit.

The **Splinters** headed for Wisconsin for the Thanksgiving holiday. They were with Tim's family, his mother, **Barb**, and of course they got to visit with their son **Kevin** who also lives and works in Wisconsin.

Tim Lewicki and his family went to New York City where son **Joji** played his violin at Carnegie Hall. Now THAT'S a unique way to spend the Thanksgiving weekend!

Bill and Marsha Snyder had their family for Thanksgiving at their home and were expecting 15 or more for dinner. Daughter **Jill** and her family from Dayton, son **Luke** and his family from Courtland, niece **Amanda** and her son from Poland, and sister **Linda** from Columbiana.

Laurie Barney went to Pittsburg to be with her son and his family, so she also enjoyed time with her new granddaughter.

Tom & Maryjane Furrer were in Portugal on a river cruise and had a wonderful time seeing all the beautiful sites. Maryjane said it was a good kind of cruise; the kind she'd recommend to anyone. For Thanksgiving she and Tom were in Georgia with their daughter for the holiday.

Nancy & Fred Lungren went to their daughter **Lisa's** home where they were joined by son **Bill** and his two daughters, **Jeanie and Suzy** who came in from Texas. They haven't seen the girls in years and were really looking forward

to their visit. Hopefully **Lisa's** daughters **Taylor and Paige** enjoyed the day and the family gathering, too if they could each arrange for time off a busy work schedule.

Nancy Ervin was busy cooking for her family. Her sons **Scott and Michael** came with their wives and children. Nancy had recruited two of her granddaughters to come over and help with the dinner prep. No doubt, they can learn a lot being in the kitchen with Grandma!

Kingsland Pretorius and Doug Holzschuh went to her niece's home for Thanksgiving. Kingsland just hosted a surprise 90th birthday party for her mother, so she and Doug welcomed the invitation to have Thanksgiving with her niece and her family.

We had a lovely baptism here at Grace when **Lilliana Kauffman** was baptized on November 12th. She's only 4 months old, the youngest of **Lynanne and Ben's** three children; and the newest addition to **Joanne Sarver's** grandchildren. Many of the family members were at Grace for Lilliana's baptism. It was so nice to see all of them and especially Joanne, who's been unable to attend for a while, due to some serious health issues. We're honored that parents Lynanne and Ben Kauffman wanted to have Lilliana baptized at Grandma Sarver's church, especially since her 'older' sister, **Madelyn** (now two and a half) was baptized here in 2021. The Kauffman family also provided lots of tasty pastries and lemonade for coffee hour after the baptism. Our thanks to them for the goodies and our thanks to **Nancy Ervin, Cindy Hoskins, and Cindy Ward** for hosting coffee hour that day.

Gracie's Back Door is getting ready for Christmas. **Nancy Lundgren, Sally Dier, Laurie Barney, Shirley Johnson**, and other volunteers have been busy dusting and moving things around. Laurie Barney was in charge of moving angels. (You don't get that job every day!) Also, **Dennis Dier and Fred Lundgren** loaded up Dennis's truck with lots of books and other items Gracie's donated to the Renaissance Center, a non-profit outreach and assistance group in Windham.

In response to Christmas appeals, we delivered thirteen \$25 gift cards to the Ravenna Assembly of God Church, who partners with Job and Family Services and other faith groups to provide gift cards for Foster Teens of Portage County, a group too often overlooked at the holidays. Grace members gave gift cards totaling \$275. The goal was to have enough cards for 70 teens, and the cards we delivered put them over their goal. So, thanks to everyone who donated!

Well, the holidays are upon us and a very busy time of the year with baking, cooking, shopping and gift giving. Please don't forget those less fortunate. As you may already know, Christmas Eve is on a Sunday. On Dec. 24th we'll observe 4 Advent at the 8am & 10am services. The evening service will begin at 10pm with a half hour of carols and anthems, and Eucharist will begin at 10:30pm. We'll also have a quiet Eucharist at 10am on Christmas Day. We hope to see you at one or two of these services.

Thank you! Thank you!

Our thanks & appreciation to those who serve & help at Grace Church in so many ways, including:

- **John McDonald** for installing a new electrical outlet in the kitchen. (He had to go through three walls where electrical lines had been added over the years!) Now the coffee maker AND the microwave can be used at the same time without tripping a breaker switch.
- **Junior Warden Carol Marotta** for work she's done researching a new stove for the parish hall kitchen.
- **Kathy and Walt Zielinski** for sharing their voices with the church choir. What a difference two more voices make, especially these voices.
- **Dennis Dier & Fred Lungren** for moving books and other items from Gracie's to donate to the Renaissance Center.
- **Shirley Johnson and Laurie Barney** for helping in Gracie's Back Door.
- **To all those** who bought the \$25 gift cards for the teens of Portage County in foster care.

Stewardship for 2024

Our rector and Grace vestry members offer our thanks and appreciation to all those who returned pledge cards for 2024 giving to support Grace Church in the worship, service, fellowship, and ministries we share. Please know there are still pledge cards in the office and in the back of the church, if you haven't had a chance to complete one yet. If for some reason you did not receive a stewardship letter and pledge card, please call the office, and we'll make sure you get one.

Our thanks to each and every member who keeps Grace Church going by sharing your God given gifts; sharing your financial resources; praying for our church family and the diocese; and praying for a strong, faithful Church that glorifies and blesses the Lord.

Breakfast Club

Dec 21st, 8:00 AM

Cracker Barrel

Everyone is invited to join the group! We order off the menu and pay for our own meals.



Birthdays

7th Roberta O'Keefe
11th Kay Canan
16th Shirley Johnson
21st Beth Dier
27th John Monegan
29th Rachel Audet
31st Hank Cabot



Congratulations!

and many happy returns...



Anniversaries

6th Hank & Mary Cabot
14th John & Cherry Monegan
17th Bruce & Sue Ahrens
22nd Jim & Amy Neely

Baptisms

3rd Rev. Carol Evans
13th Mike Johnson
22nd Michael Canan



The Bulletin Board

Adopt-A-Family 2023

Our Grace Vestry has once again decided to “Adopt-A-Family” that is in need this holiday season. We’re asking for monetary donations to assist with this outreach project. Our goal is \$1,500. You were very generous last year, and we exceeded our goal.

If you are so moved by this appeal, please make your check out to: Grace Episcopal Church and mark “Adopt” in the memo. Please place it in the collection plate or mail it to the church office by December 10th.

The address is:
Grace Episcopal Church
250 W. Cedar Ave.
Ravenna, OH 44266

Again, your generosity in the past has been phenomenal for people in need. Thank you for any help you can give. It will be greatly appreciated.

Grace Church Vestry

Outreach Projects

Center of Hope (red wagon) -Peanut Butter, Ramen Noodles, Mac n cheese, Cans of Tuna/Chicken

Center of Hope - Socks, Underwear, Hats, Gloves DUE to the center by 12/8/23. We will be collecting socks and underwear all year.

Also, Shampoo/Conditioner, Toothpaste/Toothbrushes, Travel Mouthwash, and Dental Floss.

APL - List of needs is on the container in the parish hall

Ravenna High School - Male/Female Deodorant, Body Wash, other hygiene products, Unscented Wipes, and Laundry Detergent which is sent home with the students.

Raven Packs - We will be donating money (Outreach dollars from Beatty) instead of collecting food items from parishioners. If anyone would like to donate on their own the address is: Raven Packs P.O. Box 728 Ravenna, OH 44266



Please help with these Outreach Projects. There are many in need. Thank You for any assistance you can give.

The Advent Wreath

By Bette Brooks



Do you have an Advent wreath in your home? Have you thought about the symbolism of the colors? Does the order in which the candles are lit have any meaning? Is there perhaps a way to make this more meaningful? Below is what I've learned through using our family wreath.

It was late November 1984, and we were new members of Christ Church Manlius, near Syracuse, NY. The apartment we had been assured would be remodeled and ready in August had not been ready and we had only recently moved into it—2 full house moves in 3 months. We were still unpacking. During coffee and conversation after the service, I noticed a group selling advent wreaths. David quickly bought one and we headed home. This little permanent wreath has been on our dining room table each Advent since. The frame that held the candles is long-gone but small glass candlesticks make excellent substitutes nestled among the green.

There are 3 colors associated with Advent wreaths—purple, pink, and white—and each has special meaning. Purple is associated with penitence and Lent; it is also associated with royalty as during Advent when it reminds us that Christ is King of kings, and Lord of lords. Pink is a color associated with joy, and Advent is leading us into the joyous season of Christmas. White is the color of purity, light, and victory, a fitting symbolic color for Jesus. And the circular shape of the wreath is also meaningful—love without beginning or end.

On the first Sunday of Advent, we light the purple Prophecy Candle. This candle reminds us of the prophecies about the coming of the Messiah who would bring peace and love to the world. On the second Sunday, we light the second purple candle, often called the Bethlehem Candle. This reminds us of the dark night when Joseph and Mary found light and warmth in a stable in Bethlehem. On the third Sunday, we light the pink candle, the Shepherd's Candle, which symbolizes the joy the shepherds felt when told of the Christ Child's birth. On the fourth Sunday, we light the third and final purple candle, called the Angel's Candle. This candle symbolizes the culmination of God's love shown to us in the life of Christ, which leads us to the lighting of the Christ Candle (the white one in the center) on Christmas Eve. [Some sources call this final purple candle the Magi's Candle, remembering the star that guided them to the stable.]

So, in what order do you arrange the candles in your wreath? Here, you have a choice. Facing your wreath and moving in a clockwise manner from top (candle furthest from you) on around, you can put them in the order in which they will be lit—first and second Sundays are purple, third Sunday is pink, and fourth Sunday is purple again. The white candle is always in the middle and should be a bit higher than the others. If, however, you wish to make the sign of the Cross when lighting the candles, you'll light them in a different order, so of course the candles will be in a different color order in your wreath. Again, starting at the top (candle furthest away from you) this candle is purple and you light it first. The second candle you light is also purple, but it is at the bottom (closest to you). The third candle is pink and on the left as you face the wreath, and the fourth candle is purple and is on your right. By the fourth Sunday of Advent, you are making the sign of the Cross as you light your candles (top, bottom, left, right). And then on Christmas Eve you light these four and the white Christ Candle in the middle, making the full sign of the Cross.

(Continued on next page)

Below are the collects for each of the weeks of Advent, taken from the Book of Common Prayer. Holiday wishes for a blessed Advent and a glorious Christmas.

Prayer for the first week of Advent

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Prayer for the second week of Advent

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

Prayer for the third week of Advent

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

Prayer for the fourth week of Advent

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Personal Advent Study

On the back table in the sanctuary, you will find the Advent booklet from Living Compass:

Living Well Through Advent 2023: Practicing Wonder with All Your Heart, Soul, Strength, and Mind.

Because of how busy the holiday season is for all of us, a weekly gathering for a simple supper, program, and Compline did not seem realistic. So, during this Advent season, the booklet can guide your personal devotions in any number of ways.

Each Sunday has a reflection whose theme is carried through the other readings for the week. These are all short pieces that can be part of your devotions or simply interesting things to read. Each entry has a section that invites you to "Make It Personal" if you want to think more deeply.

The Revised Common Lectionary Readings for the Sundays of Advent 2023 are listed in a chart near the front of the booklet, and the last section includes numerous "Scriptures, Quotes, Prayers & Practices for Advent" to further engage you.

Please be sure to pick up a copy for your family, and a Blessed Advent to all!



The Grace Vine

Grace Episcopal Church
250 W. Cedar St.
Ravenna OH 44266

Grace Episcopal Church of Ravenna

The Rev. Carol Evans—Rector
The Rev. William Snyder
Marsha Snyder—Secretary
Tim Lewicki—Organist
Martha Croll—Choirmaster

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The Vestry of Grace Episcopal Church
Laurie Barney, Clerk (2023)
Barb Popiel, Senior Warden (2023)
Kingsland Pretorius (2023)
Midge Myers (2024)
Carol Marotta, Junior Warden (2025)
Kay Wise (2025)

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If you would like to take advantage of this, send me an email at grwebmaster@graceravenna.org. Please consider the paper copy and have it read rather than save the paper and postage and have it go unread.