

Grace Lutheran Church

It is that time again that we ask you to think about your finances and to set aside some for the coming year for the church. We do this not so that you can keep your membership up or even that we can keep the lights on, but because it is an important part of the Christian journey. Tithing transforms us, as much as it contributes to the ministry here at Grace.

Matt 6:19ff teaches us : “ Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal, **“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”**

Most people miss quote this text, it is often remembered as “where your heart is, your treasure will be also” Read this way, means you will spend your money on the things you love. It is normal to give to things you feel are important, those which you are most passionate about. The disciples, listening to Jesus, would have been surprised by the words Jesus chose. They would have expected Jesus to say, “where your heart is your treasure will be also.”

Jesus doesn't miss speak, he actually chooses his words very wisely, **“Where your treasure is there your heart is also.”** Where we put our treasure ,i.e. our time, money, energy; our heart will follow, the other reading relies on your heart to feel like doing giving and doing. The reality is, we don't always feel like doing something, truthfully we don't always feel that same day to day, Some days we are just plain lazy and other times we feel like we have the energy to move mountains. Jesus chooses his words wisely , where you put your treasure, there your heart will follow.

Where do you feel your heart should be? We actually have the ability to change it in our hearts. (How amazing!) Where do you want your heart to be? What do you wish you cared more about? Jesus makes it simple. **“Where your treasure is there your heart is also.”**

I chose this passage, because I know I do not always feel like giving; some weeks, things feel tight, some weeks my attitude just leaves a lot to be desired, I choose to tithe because Jesus asks us to, but also because it keeps my heart where it should be, When I write that check or direct those funds on my computer, it is a reminder of who I choose to be, not what I feel like today or tomorrow, It is a declaration of faith in Jesus Christ and His church.

Please fill out a pledge card. You will not be graded on what you give or how well you follow through but let it be a reminder of who you choose to be, a follower of Jesus Christ, If you are unable to give financially; on the back of your slip, write what you can give in hours, each month or week, let that be a pledge in itself, something honorable and pleasing in the sight of the Lord.

Peace,

Pastor Kristi Gallimore.

Pay it Forward- Giving is the Greatest Blessing How Do I Use the Pledge Card?

First, look at the pledge card included in this month's Gracelines and see that it is divided in two sections. Separate the sections by cutting it into one large and one small piece.

Use the smaller portion to indicate ONLY the amount of your pledge, (DO NOT SIGN THIS). Then either place it in the offering on Sunday or bring it to the congregational meeting on Jan 22, where a basket will be on the table for your convenience.

On the larger portion, indicate the amount of the pledge and sign your name. This reflects your commitment and is between you and the Lord. Now put that in an envelope, seal it, then address the envelope to yourself and place the SEALED envelope and either place in offering or bring it to the congregational meeting and place in basket as well. This will be mailed back to you later in the year of 2017.

Now for the hard part and equally important; On a separate paper, indicate how many hours either weekly or monthly you are willing to tithe to the work of the church. And what you are willing to do or are passionate about and what you would like to try doing then write your name on it too. (that's the hard part) then bring to meeting and place in basket along with your pledge card.

A few ideas follow:

Assisting at worship

Ushering

Altar care

Setting up and taking down communion ware

Reading scripture at worship

Singing in choir or praise team

Playing a musical instrument

Assisting in nursery at 2nd service

Write thank you cards

Fold bulletins

Greeting visitors at worship and special fellowship ship events

Decorating for events

Prayer chain member

Visit home bound members or hospitalized

Patients

Provide rides to and from church

Share your faith story at a worship (testimonial)service

Candle lighters at either service

Count offerings weekly

Office assistants as needed

Teach or assist Sunday School

Minor janitorial or maintenance

Landscaping and lawn care

Assisting with pot lucks and kitchen help& other fellowship meal events

Table and chair set up and take downs

Baking communion bread

Donating flowers for altar

Photograph events for newsletter and social media and web site

Member visiting

Participate in neighborhood outreach events

Operate the AV system as needed

Operate the sound board as needed

The 'work' is here, both within the walls of Grace and out in the community. We surely have a sample listed above, you will have more ideas as we all are gifted differently and have differing physical abilities. What gift do you bring to the Lord?.

Congregational Meeting
Jan 22 at 12 noon



Some of us (me too) did not read the letter that was included in the annual pledge appeal so it has been included in this issue of Gracelines. Please take the time to read Pastor's message and fill out the enclosed blue pledge card and bring it to the annual meeting and place in the provided basket on the cookie table.

MERRY CHRISTMAS to ALL
Yep it is still Christmas --in fact this holiday did not start till DEC 25 and goes through Epiphany on Jan 6.

Confirmation for 6th thru 8th grade youth resumes on Tues 7PM to 8PM. Contact Pastor Kristi for additional info or if you have a young friend or neighbor that might be interested in exploring their faith.

Quaker Saying:

"Sacrifice is the ecstasy of giving the best of what we have to the one we love the most"

**Hearing the Story and
Learning to pray**



Change coming in new year for newsletter.. Please let office know your preference to either not get one at all, get yours via e mail or continue to get one in red mailslots in FH.

ADVENT PARTY, 2016





SEE YOU ALL NEXT ADVENT SEASON!

We contributed approx. 75 lbs of food items to our local food bank in Dec thank you to Jerry & Dennis H. for doing delivery duties in 2016.

Countdown to Christmas was a Huge Success!

We have 50 people join for food, fun, fellowship and frivolous swags. Over half of those who came were not members here at Grace Lutheran. I am so glad that the community CAME!

Thank you to so many who helped make this happen. Thank you to those who prepped the crafts, set the tables, made the food, carried the invitations, put up the sign, made announcements, brought buttons, made cookies and shared the event with neighbors.

Thank you also to those who came and ate, crafted, and celebrated the coming Christ.

Congregational Meeting Jan 22 at 12 noon

This year at the congregational Meeting, we will be looking at changing the worship times. While we do not need to formally vote, we are looking for a consensus.

Consider these three options.

1. Leaving things as they are.
2. Move the service times; 1st service at 9:00 and 2nd service at 10:15. Sunday School would run concurrent with the 10:15 services. Moving the two services closer in time would enable more opportunities for fellowship between the services.
3. Combine services at 9:30. Sunday school would follow at 10:30. This would be a new service which include both traditional and contemporary elements. It would hold the basic form of the traditional services while giving it a more contemporary flare. It would rarely include sung liturgy, but would be a less formal style of worship.



Demographics and Stats for Ukiah and the shrinking church.

Of interest is that the Ukiah Valley has approx. 15,977 people as of 2014 with the median age 36.6 yrs. The median income is \$42,237 with 22.9 % living in or below the federal poverty guidelines.

The church has its work cut out as 3 in 10 adults seldom or never attend worship (29% in 2014 while in 2003 it was 25%)

37% adults claim they attend weekly, however, what they claim and behavior (actually do or go) is different. Less than 20% actually go to Orthodox, Catholic, Mainline or Evangelical. A disconnect here.



Smaller churches are doing better growing, as young people are looking for community, closeness and intergenerational relationships.

Churches with ageing populations over 40 yrs are on decline, usually because both clergy and laity have to re-define who they are (or their spiritual teaching cores, what they believe and why they exist) and meet the needs of surrounding community.

The greatest danger to the church is separation of Jesus from the church.

We have our work cut out for us in that Jesus, gave us his commission to:

go and make disciples

FAITH GIRLZ resumes with a January movie night complete with jammies,blankies and lots of snackies on Jan 12 at 5:30pm. Contact Shelia P or church office for more info.