



DECEMBER 2023

WHAT IS REAL AND WHAT ISN'T?

We are at the beginning or perhaps in the middle of the implementation of AI, artificial intelligence. We find it increasingly difficult to find the truth, if such a thing remains. Let's try a bit of dishonesty here or there, after all we do that for the sake of the "real" truth, the one that we are alone to know. We, most of us, people of faith want to distinguish the truth, without bias, without controversy. We do not see how it could be that one story is true, and another a lie. That's true in the world of churches, those that claim power, that are not churches at all, and those who use their power, not for love and decency but for perpetuation, for influence, to ensure that God will reign in their way or the highway. You see, they have always known better, and see how it is that they know everything now. The mysteries that have always been of primacy in our faith simply play into politics and the power of manipulation. Even when such a church never, sadly, can find the truth.

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Revelation 22:1-9 (NRSV)

¹Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ²through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; ⁴they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

⁶And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true, for the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place."

⁷See, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.

⁸I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me; ⁹but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your comrades the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!"

(continues on page 2)



Ethical choices no longer matter, we can violate privacy, lives of others, their families, all to the "good" of those who carry the power, the influence and ultimately the judgement because only they represent God. Only them. There is nothing to stop this juggernaut except God, there are no limits to what they will do. This is the church version of the right wing, the one that is glad to have Mussolini build a church at the place of the sermon on the mount, it has no ability to control itself through faith, because the leaders of that church expect them to act with impunity. Obviously, they're doing the work of the people. They know better, they have all of the answers, and they are so often through history behind choices that have led to bloodshed and terror. Yes, the church.

What happened to Mother Theresa of Calcutta. Was she a saint, or a packaged means to evangelize, not as it once meant, but how it was then promulgated. Can power substitute for sainthood, or can they work in tandem? Was she real or a concoction of multiple intentions? We don't know, how could we? A small few really do. Not us.

Witnessing what the church will do to someone who has love for the people and those who want to serve. They come after those in the way, simply, they come after them. Corruption can be seen in the religious "right" of all elements of churches, particularly those that have a need to be in power no matter what is happening to the people or the country or the others. What happened to Oscar Romero, and why? What about today's Supreme Court? The priest who would have the Pope slain? The ridiculous senator who has the audacity to offer things that have no purpose to a person who loves God and lives in Christ. Enough! Enough! Go away. Go away where you belong!

Christian Nationalism is not Christianity at all. We have spoken of this ad nauseum here, and it continues to claim its power and validity as it supports a sick and fascist man who cares nothing about anything save revenge and retribution. And these vermin (the word he uses for others) is vermin himself, like Hitler, and so many others before him. When Putin is your model of a great leader, you must be in trouble. When you hold up a man in Argentina who got elected with a chain saw, illustrating how he would destroy all that the state represented, is simply one more model of fascism that may be following Trump's lead.

The pressure of the horrors consuming our country, and much of the world, caused our own dear, presiding Bishop to step away... the circumstances virtually impossible to come to grips with. Does all of this represent Christ's second coming...? Many of us have wondered. Many of us trust that and are ready.

In the meantime, we must live as Christ calls us to... with love, caring for all those suffering, the fear is all around us, the hunger, the people who come for help and reach out to those who would offer it, that is what we will do as long as we can and with all of the force of our faith, our love for one another, and for every single one no matter how different they may be from us. No matter where they come from, what they have done with their lives or to others, what they struggle with and why, and we don't put ourselves above them, we learn from them, and we show them other ways to be and to live. We advocate for them, we try to draw others into this work with us, and we will do what we can trusting that the faiths that pull together for this work without malice towards any others, and with a genuine interest in pulling together as people who understand that we are not perfect, nor is anyone else that lives on this planet, save our sure knowledge of what we are to do.



On April 3, 1968, he delivered a speech at the Mason Temple Church of God. This 43-minute talk is the last speech he ever gave. *“Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I’m not concerned about that now. I just want to do God’s will. And He’s allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I’ve looked over. And I’ve seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land!”*

That’s the most famous passage. But an earlier passage sums up the life and legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.

“That’s the question before you tonight. Not, ‘If I stop to help the sanitation workers, what will happen to my job.’ Not, ‘If I stop to help the sanitation workers what will happen to all of the hours that I usually spend in my office every day and every week as a pastor?’ The question is not, ‘If I stop to help this man in need, what will happen to me?’ “The question is, ‘If I do not stop to help the sanitation workers, what will happen to them?’ That’s the question.”

Making Space

Silence
helps us
to mentally
relinquish,
making space
for new
understanding.
~~kirkbjones.com



PASTOR'S MESSAGE: "OUR COLLECTIVE HEALTH - IT'S IMPORTANT STUPID!"

"Among all the things in life, including the honoring and holding up those who have left us, we may remember that our health, is indeed very important, too. Often ignored in favor of the lives we live and what we judge as important, and urgent, too often relegates our health to "not of great concern."

These last couple of years, we have faced one health challenge after another as a family, and I have come to have great respect for those who care for us, and the power of prayer. Judy's recovery process, David's holding his own, and the decision we made to bring a puppy into the midst of all that have stimulated healing. Porsche, the puppy, was to be a gift of joy to us when we needed it most, and a distraction of love. We highly recommend such extravagance.

But the sheer quantity of challenges faced in recent months have all but crushed this aging pastor. It's time to better manage my time. Dorothea's acknowledgement of my exhaustion at a recent service was so loving, so natural and so remarkable. Not only did the service continue without a pause, but she kindly offered me communion as I sat down on the side and experienced the rest of the service.

Last Sunday, after the service, I once again was challenged. You see, I was to pick up Judy at the airport as she had been gone from a very indescribable week, and I needed to be there on time. Grace took charge. Yes, and I mean the word, grace. Betsy informed me that I was not going to pick up Judy at the airport, she was. Others took charge of other things needing be done and I was encouraged to go home and rest. (there was even an invitation for me to go home with someone else, and come pick up the car later). Dave and I drove home carefully. And minutes after we returned, a knock on the door signaled that Judy was home. Wow!

We give you thanks each one of you who have provided me with support. Now, I will face surgery in the coming weeks, still to be determined. I must continue to pay more attention to my health. If you were to fully understand and know all that I am doing, you might decide to lock me up! As I prepare for the procedure, I will pull back some from my schedule, leaving to all those in this church who have supported me, and loved me, as I have loved them.

With Sister Emmanuella back, and plans made for a thanksgiving for our volunteers and a joyful series of events during the holidays, may God give us all the time to recover from all that is happening in this world, our country, this City, and may we remember those who are now looking down at us, and praying for us, as we have honored them and their contributions to this wonderful church. May we learn how to keep others in our care and our love just as we discover ways to take care of ourselves. (Emmanuella's voice is coming back, too! And, Nilda, is learning how not to slug "Ish" anymore and thereby regain her full strength in her arm).

May God show us even more clearly, how we can help more, love more and imagine more ways to be in this place with you, Him and us. Amen.

BE THANKFUL



Be Thankful

Be thankful that you don't already have everything you desire.
If you did, what would there be to look forward to?

Be thankful when you don't know something,
for it gives you the opportunity to learn.

Be thankful for the difficult times.
During those times you grow.

Be thankful for your limitations,
because they give you opportunities for improvement.

Be thankful for each new challenge,
because it will build your strength and character.

Be thankful for your mistakes.
They will teach you valuable lessons.

Be thankful when you're tired and weary,
because it means you've made a difference.

It's easy to be thankful for the good things.
A life of rich fulfillment comes to those who
are also thankful for the setbacks.

Gratitude can turn a negative into a positive.
Find a way to be thankful for your troubles,
and they can become your blessings.

~Author Unknown

MOMS-MIMOSA.COM

THIS IS WHAT A FAITH-BASED, PRO-FAMILY AGENDA REALLY LOOKS LIKE

SOJOURNERS

I'm tired of hearing politicians using "family values" as shorthand for a narrow and often misguided agenda. It is time to broaden and reclaim a truly pro-family agenda to protect and strengthen all families.

Since at least the mid-1990s, the political and Religious Right have often claimed a monopoly on "family values."

Many Democrats have only exacerbated this trend with their reticence to frame many of their policies as pro-family. As a result, whenever we hear a politician talking about "family values" or "pro-family policies," it is so often shorthand for policies that **oppose legal abortion or threaten LGBTQ+ rights** — policies that neither correspond to the nuanced views most Americans (including Christians) have on abortion nor my strong belief that that our LGBTQ+ siblings are **beloved of God** and deserve the same rights as everyone else.



Of course, if you step outside of the world of politics, it's obvious that people across a broad spectrum of political and faith backgrounds view the welfare of their family — whether biological, blended, or chosen — as the center of their lives. In other words, our narrow understanding of "pro-family policies" is a lost opportunity to forge common political ground. Protecting families should be a nonpartisan issue with bipartisan support, not another casualty of extreme partisanship.

So, I want to set the record straight and outline what I think a truly faith-inspired, pro-family agenda should look like. In short, true family values in politics should mean any program or policy that protects human dignity, helps families thrive, and promotes space for kids to grow. As Christians, we stand for this kind of "family values" not so that we can enforce our own theological beliefs on others, but rather to stay faithful to scripture's commands to generously provide for our neighbors' flourishing and protect the most vulnerable, regardless of whether they share our beliefs (Matthew 22:36-40).

My hope is that we can bring these issues to the forefront of our public debate with greater vigilance and clarity, particularly as so many politicians seek to cut or even eliminate these very programs. This threat is heightened due to the imminent danger of a reckless government shutdown, instigated by members of the far-right Freedom Caucus, which would profoundly harm families and communities.

1. Pro-family policies provide vital support to families experiencing poverty, lift families out of poverty, and keep families out of poverty. Research shows that children thrive when their parents have the resources necessary to help all family members succeed. Supporting parents is especially critical during the first three years of their child's life, when developmental changes are occurring that may impact the child into adulthood. For example, adverse childhood experiences such as poverty can impact the health, well-being, and safety of a small child, and are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance use disorders into adulthood. That means children living in poverty and the underlying associated stress are more likely to experience negative long-term impacts that prevent them from realizing their full potential in adulthood.

THIS IS WHAT A FAITH-BASED, PRO-FAMILY AGENDA REALLY LOOKS LIKE

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Earlier this month, the Census Bureau **released its annual report** on poverty in the U.S., revealing that poverty **jumped** from 7.8 percent in 2021 to 12.4 percent in 2022, a 60 percent increase. Even more heartbreaking: Child poverty **more than doubled**.

These are sobering, but not surprising numbers: During the height of the pandemic, the stimulus payments of President Donald Trump and President Joe Biden's administrations — and in particular the expanded Child Tax Credit (CTC) in Biden's American Rescue Plan — brought poverty down sharply in 2021. The expanded CTC was a true game-changer, lifting **nearly 3 million children** out of poverty with monthly payments to many families of **\$250-300 per child** per month for the six months the policy was in effect. By enacting these measures to support families and children experiencing poverty, policymakers made a bold choice. In 2022, the expanded CTC ended — and increased rates of child poverty followed. Last August, a renewed CTC and other pro-family, anti-poverty programs were **excluded** from last year's Inflation Reduction Act, due primarily to Republican opposition.

2. Pro-family policies support parents and enable them to better care for their children. Many policies that were included in Biden's Build Back Better agenda last year but failed to pass the Senate were profoundly pro-family in nature, though they were rarely framed or communicated as such. For instance, addressing the often exorbitant cost of child care and making quality care affordable and accessible to all parents ensures that children have the care and attention they need while a parent is working. Incentivizing states to implement universal pre-K programs would also help with child care costs and start children from all income backgrounds on a better path to educational success. Guaranteeing parents 12 weeks of universal family and medical leave (as early versions of Build Back Better would have done) enables parents to care for and bond with their baby. Tragically, the United States falls far behind almost all of the industrial world in ensuring these "pro-family" commitments. Opponents of expanding these programs often argue they are too costly and burdensome; however, these are worthwhile investments that advance the common good, especially when considering that economic pressures of parenting put great strain on familial relationships.

3. Pro-family policies ensure the health and well-being of mothers, babies, and young children. If we want to talk about policies that are truly pro-family, the **Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act** is an essential

place to start. As Sojourners political director Lauren W. Reliford wrote, **this package of legislation would** "adopt a comprehensive, evidence-based approach" to "course correct the current flaws in our maternal, newborn, and child health care system." Mothers in the United States have higher rates of maternal mortality than any other high-wealth nation. In the U.S., Black and American Indian/Alaska Native

women are 2 to 3 times more likely to die from a pregnancy-related cause than white women. These disparities are often blamed on racist tropes about Black poverty and family life; however, a Black mother with a college education is still at 60 percent greater risk for a maternal death than a white or Hispanic woman with less than a high school education. The Black maternal health crisis is exposing cracks in our maternal and newborn care system.



THIS IS WHAT A FAITH-BASED, PRO-FAMILY AGENDA REALLY LOOKS LIKE

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Addressing these fundamental issues will create a baseline system of care that benefits all women and children in the U.S. Programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provide a lifeline to families in preventing both hunger and malnutrition. The programs should be expanded, not undermined with cuts or unnecessary additional work requirements.

4. Pro-family policies keep migrant families together. Families that have been forced to escape extreme poverty, violence, and repression in their countries and are exercising their legal right to seek asylum in the U.S. are no less worthy of protection than families of U.S. citizens. Lawmakers have failed again and again to deliver the comprehensive immigration reform that our country so badly needs. Yet as Christians, we are called to look beyond what seems politically possible and envision new realities that **transcend the brokenness of what is**. Separating migrant parents from their children is both highly immoral and anti-family. An immigration system that treats migrant families with the same dignity that everyone wants for their own family is possible, and we must never stop fighting for it.

5. Pro-family policies protect and steward God's creation for our children and future generations. Climate change is the defining crisis of our time, one that impacts every other pro-family issue we care about. We need to continue pushing for the **successful implementation** of the Inflation Reduction Act, which made the largest ever investment by Congress in fighting climate change. We also need to champion policies that will take us beyond the IRA and allow us to reach the carbon reduction targets science tells us are not only necessary but imperative.

Even this more comprehensive list of pro-family commitments is incomplete. Increasing access to affordable housing and ending family homelessness, combatting the epidemic of gun violence, addressing the crisis of suicide and mental health, and so much more are also deeply pro-family. In times of budget battles and hard policy choices, we desperately need a much more expansive pro-family agenda. We also need a healthier and more robust dialogue around the best policies and solutions to bring these pro-family goals to fruition. Otherwise, our political imagination and moral courage will continue to be stunted and we will remain captive to an overly narrow and broken paradigm. Let us work together to redefine and galvanize support for a truly pro-family agenda so that all families can be protected and thrive.



Adam Russell Taylor

Adam Russell Taylor is president of Sojourners and author of *A More Perfect Union: A New Vision for Building the Beloved Community*. Follow him on Twitter [@revadamtaylor](https://twitter.com/revadamtaylor).

POPE'S MESSAGE

His words.
Your journey.
Together.



MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2023

For some months Sudan has been in the throes of a civil war that shows no sign of abating, and which is causing numerous victims, millions of internally displaced people and refugees in neighboring countries, and a very grave humanitarian situation. I am close to the sufferings of those dear populations of Sudan, and I address a heartfelt appeal to local leaders to facilitate access to humanitarian aid and, with the contribution of the international community, to work in search of peaceful solutions. Let us not forget these brothers and sisters of ours who are in distress!

And our thoughts turn every day to the very serious situation in Israel and in Palestine. I am close to all those who are suffering, Palestinians and Israelis. I embrace them in this dark moment. And I pray for them a lot. May the weapons be stopped: they will never lead to peace, and may the conflict not widen! Enough! Enough, brothers! In Gaza, let the wounded be rescued immediately, let civilians be protected, let far more humanitarian aid be allowed to reach that stricken population. May the hostages be freed, including the elderly and children. Every human being, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, of any people or religion, every human being is sacred, is precious in the eyes of God and has the right to live in peace. Let us not lose hope: let us pray and work tirelessly so that the sense of humanity may prevail over hardness of heart.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2023

"But am I also thinking about dedicating time to the care of the heart, to prayer, to service to others, to the Lord who is the destination of life? In short, how is the oil of my soul? Each one of us, let us ask ourselves this: how is the oil of my soul? Do I nourish it, do I keep it well?"

Pope Francis

A PROBLEMATIC PAUSE

by Jonathan Kuttab

We are gratified and deeply thankful that an agreement was reached for a short “humanitarian pause” between Hamas and Israel, and we share with the joy and relief of the released captives and the ever so short respite from vengeful destruction and carnage. Nonetheless, we need to reiterate a number of shortcomings from our perspective that render this agreement insufficient :

1. The release of women and children should have been done immediately and unconditionally. They should never have been captured in the first place. Their abduction was illegal under the laws of war, immoral according to Islamic principles, and totally unconscionable. No oppression and injustice by Israel can justify such an action, which has been deeply counterproductive for the Palestinian cause anyway. I hope Hamas commanders will punish those responsible for this action and publicly make clear that it is contrary to their policies and Islamic principles. Children and noncombatants must never be used as bargaining chips.

2. The increase in access to humanitarian supplies is being agreed upon as a concession, a quid pro quo, and part of the agreement. While humanitarian supplies to the civilian population of Gaza should never have been denied in the first place, they should have been allowed into Gaza unencumbered from Day One. Like the kidnapping of civilians, barring these essential supplies is also a war crime, and must be stopped immediately. It is unconscionable that such basic humanitarian essentials as water, food, medicine, and fuel are being doled out sparingly and used as leverage and bargaining chips in this power game.

3. It is still unclear what will happen after this short respite, and whether the negotiations between Hamas and Israel (through intermediaries, at this point) can be resumed and will be able to address other core issues. The alternative is to allow those who prefer the language of violence and force to continue to hold sway. It is maddening that it took so long for those in power to even agree to such a short respite, all while promising to resume bombing with a vengeance once the suspension of hostilities is up.



The true hope of all peace-loving people is that this pause will allow tempers to cool down, the lust for vengeance to subside, and all efforts made to pursue alternative means of resolving difficult issues. At a minimum, additional exchanges of prisoners and captives should be negotiated and perhaps a reassessment made of the declared goals of the fighting. Can one even hope that some underlying issues are addressed finally and a true peace process started? Those who oppose a ceasefire seem to want only the language of violence and destruction.

Despite the bravado on both sides, it should be abundantly clear now that

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violence alone cannot advance the interests of either side. While Hamas has succeeded in shaking Israel's purported invincibility and sense of security with its attacks, no one really believes that.

Hamas can possibly liberate Palestinian territory by force, even if it is willing to pay a horrendous price as it faces the wrath of a far more powerful opponent determined to unleash its full power with no restraints. Similarly (and without making any pretense at symmetry between the two sides) Israelis must be aware by now that they cannot achieve security by military force alone, however superior and however much devastation and destruction it can wreak on its enemies and their civilian population. A political solution is ultimately in their interest as well. The stated goal of "eliminating" Hamas is clearly unobtainable, and even if it were possible it would not provide security, since other groups, perhaps even more radical, will necessarily arise out of the massive destruction entailed. If history is any indication, only further hatred will result, and other eruptions of violence are certain to occur in the future. Israel, despite being asked repeatedly by the US, seems to have no realistic plans for the future of Gaza, let alone for the day the war eventually ends.

Yet there are those in the Israeli government who may think otherwise. Of particular concern are the statements by Israeli officials that their true aim may not only be the destruction of Hamas and its military potential but the goal of ensuring that Gaza will "never again pose a threat to Israel." This means that those within the Israeli government who actively seek to depopulate Gaza, produce a "second Nakba," and forcibly move Palestinians to Egypt and Jordan may try to have their way. Indeed, a plan for such a transfer was already leaked, and Egyptian President Al Sisi openly spoke of attempts to pressure Egypt into accepting millions of Palestinians into Sinai. The fact that Palestinians were ordered by the millions to "move South" as Israel destroyed most buildings in the northern half of Gaza appears to be only the first phase of such a strategy. Israel already announced that Palestinians will not be allowed to return to the North. The discourses surrounding the threat posed by Khan Younis in the South and subsequent bombings merely serve to confirm this.



As the bombing continues, Palestinians may soon be ordered to evacuate the rest of Gaza and move into the Egyptian desert, if Israel is to achieve its stated war objectives. The strategic imperative for Zionists to ethnically cleanse Palestine of its non-Jewish population in order to "win the demographic war" and assure the Jewishness of Israel seems to be playing out today in Gaza under the guise of "eliminating Hamas."

The only way to prevent such a calamity would be a determined effort by the

United States and the international community, which so far has been either silent or complicit in the forcible transfer of Palestinians. As governments fail to act to prevent this outcome, our massive protests and direct actions demanding a ceasefire are all the more needed to prevent such a catastrophic outcome. Those, however, who would still reject such a permanent ceasefire are actively complicit in genocide and ethnic cleansing.

Sincerely,
Jonathan Kuttub, FOSNA Executive Director

THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CLEVELAND JUST ENACTED A HATEFUL NEW ANTI-LGBTQ POLICY. TELL BISHOP MALESIC THAT WE SUPPORT THE BRAVE STUDENTS WHO ARE PUSHING BACK



The Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, Ohio, has joined multiple other conservative Catholic dioceses across the country, becoming the latest to adopt a harmful set of policies that restrict the rights of LGBTQ students in local Catholic schools.

Here's the good news: **Catholic school students and alumni are pushing back, protesting the new anti-LGBTQ policy and increasing the pressure on Bishop Edward Malesic to reverse it.**

Here's how one student beautifully summed up the unholy, hypocritical impact that these sorts of anti-LGBTQ policies have on their community:

"This goes against what the Congregation of Saint Joseph teaches us -- that we should serve the dear neighbor."

The momentum against this policy is growing. Now, **let's show these courageous students and local organizers that a nationwide movement of Catholics and ecumenical allies has their backs** in this struggle.

[Tell Cleveland bishop: Repeal your harmful anti-LGBTQ education policy now >>](#)

To sum it up, **the bishop's new policies ignore the God-given autonomy, agency, and dignity of LGBTQ students.**

The diocese now requires LGBTQ students to suppress their most authentic selves by blocking them from receiving gender-affirming health care, banning them from using their preferred pronouns, and requiring that they dress and act in alignment with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Policies like these aren't just hateful -- they're literally deadly. Academic studies have consistently shown that denying gender-affirming care to trans youth results in higher rates of depression and suicide.

We know what Jesus taught -- and it's not the vile hatred being perpetuated by these policies. As Sister Christine Schenk, co-founder of the Catholic Church reform group FutureChurch and an opponent of the new policies, said about her work with her own Cleveland congregation to try to become better allies to the LGBTQ community:

"We chose to be allies of our LGBTQ sisters and brothers because our charism impels us to live the truth that love of God and love of neighbor are one."

Let's join together as Christians to uphold the God-given dignity of all LGBTQ people by advocating on behalf of the LGBTQ Catholics of Northeast Ohio today.

[Tell Bishop Malesic to repeal this deadly anti-LGBTQ policy in Catholic schools >>](#)

Thanks for everything you do to love your neighbor and to honor the image of God in all persons!

In peace,
- Karli (she/her), Rev. Nathan (he/him), and the Faithful America team.

"I think really across the entire Raytheon portfolio, you're going to see a benefit"

— Raytheon CEO Greg Hayes on a Q3 Earnings Call, October 24, 2023

That's right, just weeks ago, with hundreds of hostages captive, thousands already killed, and an Israeli military siege of Gaza just beginning, **Raytheon's CEO shamelessly promoted war as good for business.**

A fragile ceasefire is in place today, but what happens tomorrow is unclear. Meanwhile, settler attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank are increasing and strikes between the Israeli military and Hezbollah have displaced thousands of people in Lebanon.

While we fight for peace, the war lobby is scheming ways to grow their profits. Arms control activists recently discovered an unprecedented effort to waive transparency requirements on BILLION-dollar weapons sales to the Israeli government in the fine print of a funding supplemental.[1] Josh Paul, a former director at the State Department, called the legislative provision an "insult to Congressional oversight prerogatives".

A war profiteer's fingerprints are all over a move like this — so to stop it, we need to go toe-to-toe with the war lobby. We don't have billion-dollar profit margins, but we do have a half-a-million-strong movement of activists (that's you!) on our side. That's why when we connect you with lawmakers during a huge anti-war lobby day in the coming weeks, we know they'll listen. Why? Because at the end of the day, people like YOU — not Greg Hayes — decide if political leaders keep their jobs.

We've already covered DC in thousands of "Save Lives. Ceasefire Now!" posters, held a temporary memorial on the National Mall to remind the world about the human toll of this war and met with members of Congress and key decision-makers to urge an immediate de-escalation of the conflict. *Our actions are making a real and crucial impact.*

The problem? It's not enough, not yet.

Right now, while we fight to sustain a ceasefire that can save lives, weapons lobbyists will be heading to the Hill to tell the lie that more bombs and missiles are what will keep people safe. You and I both know the



only thing more weapons get us is more war. But with geopolitical tensions on a knife's edge everywhere from the Middle East to Europe to the Pacific, weapons contractors are set to make it big, AGAIN.

It's not just the bombs that kill we need to be worried about — we've also got to stop them from turning their billion-dollar profits into influence. There's only one answer: People Power. Here's our plan: **If we raise enough funds now, we can fly impacted community members from Israel and Palestine, along with constituents from across the country — activists like you — into DC for our biggest anti-war lobby day ever.**

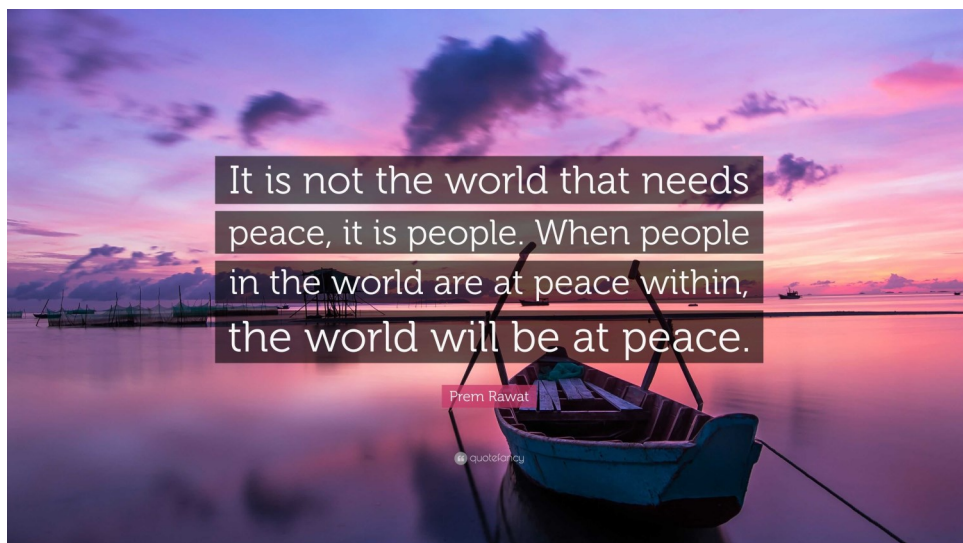
Together, we'll reaffirm our call for a ceasefire that can return all the hostages to their families, demand the Israeli government end its collective punishment of Gaza, and push every member of Congress to work toward a sustainable and just peace for people in Israel and Palestine.

A world where everyone can live and thrive without the fear of violence — in other words, a true, and lasting peace — is possible. Right now that looks like reuniting hostages with their loved ones, ending the Israeli government's violent collective punishment, and focusing decision-makers on solutions that recognize dignity and humanity.

Thank you for working for peace,

The Win Without War team

[1] *In These Times*, "[White House Requests “Unprecedented” Loophole That Would Obscure Arms Sales to Israel](#)"



THE JUSTICE MINISTRY OF GRACE THROUGH GHIAA

As we end the year 2023 and look ahead it is important to recognize that Grace congregation has been deeply involved in ministry to our members and to our community in many ways. One of those ways is what we have achieved through the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance (GHIAA). Grace has been a member of GHIAA since it began. We have supported the work of GHIAA through our financial support and many from our faith community have been directly involved with press conferences, meetings at the capitol, letters to our legislative representatives, attending anti-racism classes and in many other ways. Members of our GHIAA core group this year have been: Barbara Carman, Peter Hinks, Nina Kretschmer, Nancy Urban, Emma Coleman- Carr, Lou Oliver, Gladys Jackson, Samantha Bernstein-Naples, Rick Kremer, Louisa Barton-Duguay, Darrell Urban, Emmanuella Hart, Sue Carey, Paul LaMonaca, Roberta LaMonaca, Judy Butterworth-Kremer, and Gary Vollinger.

The following article will illustrate what we as a congregation, along with other faith-based organizations in the Greater Hartford area, have been able to achieve through GHIAA:



**CENTER for
LEADERSHIP
& JUSTICE**



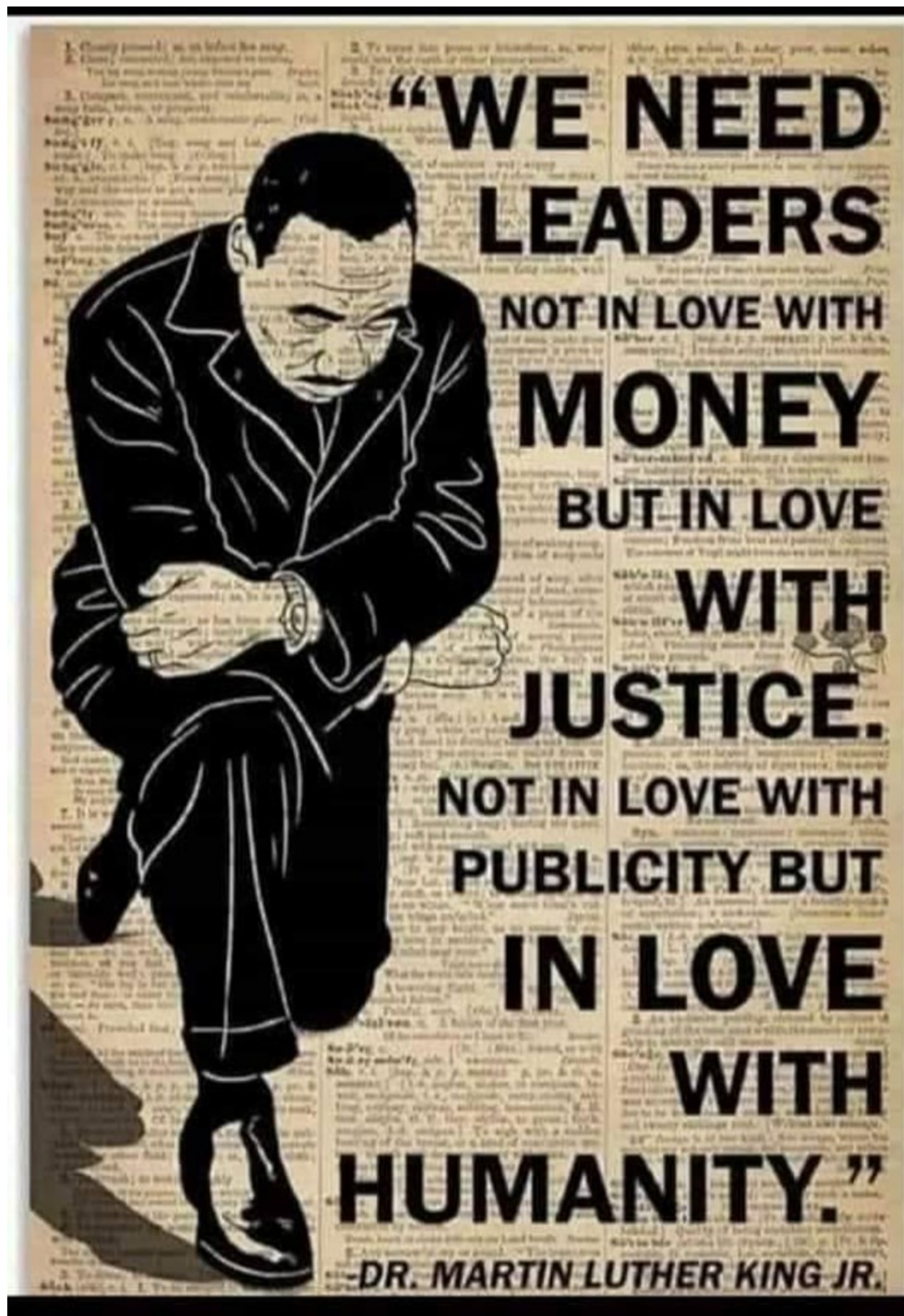


TO:

The Center for Leadership and Justice (CLJ) does critical work. Our impact is broad: through the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance (GHIAA); through neighborhood organizing and relationship building; and through affordable housing programs. Each year, **we need to raise one million dollars** to support and continue these vital initiatives.

There are so many specific instances by which our organizing and creating community power has made systemic change that directly impacts real people's lives. In the last two years:

- **We** organized residents on Irving Street in Hartford to quell the violence and win the development of new housing on a blighted vacant lot.
- **We** successfully convinced the legislature to enact legislation establishing oversight and funding to remediate the former MIRA trash-to-energy plant in the South Meadows, including leaders who have environmental justice and the health of Hartford's residents as a key priority.
- **We** organized gun violence prevention groups to secure \$22 million in the state budget for violence prevention and intervention.
- **We** joined with coalition partners to expand state health benefits for children and youth who are income-eligible but currently excluded due to immigration status.
- **We** obtained a historic \$150 million legislative investment in public education and won a commitment to full funding of the Education Cost Sharing Formula as of 2026.



REMEMBERING ROSALYNN CARTER

After Mr. Carter lost his re-election bid in 1980 to Ronald Reagan, he and Mrs. Carter embarked on what became the longest, most active post-presidency in American history. They traveled the world in support of human rights, democracy, and health programs; domestically, they labored in service to others, most prominently pounding nails to help build houses for Habitat for Humanity.

In October 2019, after more than 73 years of marriage, they became the nation's longest-married presidential couple, surpassing the record set by George H.W. Bush and Barbara Bush. The Carters marked their 77th wedding anniversary in July.



In the continuum of first ladies after Mrs. Roosevelt, Mrs. Carter broke the mold. Like most of the others, she championed a cause — hers was the treatment of mental illness. But she also immersed herself in the business of the nation and kept a sharp eye on politics, a realm her husband famously claimed to ignore.

She frequently attended Mr. Carter's cabinet meetings and traveled abroad to meet with heads of state in visits labeled substantive, not ceremonial. She often sat in on the daily National Security Council briefings held for the president and senior staff.

Mrs. Carter entered the White House at the height of the women's movement and seemed to derive strength from it, though she did not identify herself as a feminist. She lobbied vigorously for the Equal Rights Amendment and for women to participate at all levels of government, from honor guard at the White House to justice of the Supreme Court. She had her staff assemble a roster of qualified women for various appointments, according to the [National First Ladies' Library](#), and she suggested candidates for federal judgeships.

With her push, Congress formally recognized the office of the first lady as a federal position and provided funding for a staff. Mrs. Carter became the first presidential wife to carry a briefcase daily to a White House office.

They co-founded the Carter Center in Atlanta to promote peace, resolve conflicts and eradicate diseases. One week a year, they helped build houses for Habitat for Humanity, working on more than 4,000 homes in more than a dozen countries. And they wrote a book together, "Everything to Gain: Making the Most of the Rest of Your Life," published in 1987.

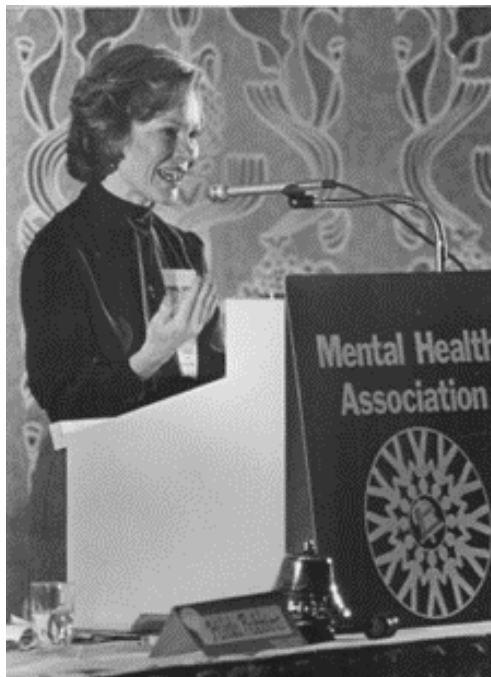


Mrs. Carter in 1999, the year that she and her husband jointly received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor. Credit...Librado Romero/The New York Times

In 1999, the Carters jointly received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor and one rarely bestowed on a husband and wife.

Mrs. Carter, who also co-founded a nonprofit that promotes childhood immunizations, served as a deacon at the Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains and liked to go fly-fishing and bird-watching with her husband. She practiced tai chi and meditated.

But her primary cause remained trying to reduce the stigma of mental illness, an effort reiterated in the Carter Center statement in May disclosing that she had dementia.



“One in 10 older Americans have dementia,” the statement said. “We hope sharing our family’s news will increase important conversations at kitchen tables and in doctor’s offices around the country.”

Drawn from the New York Times

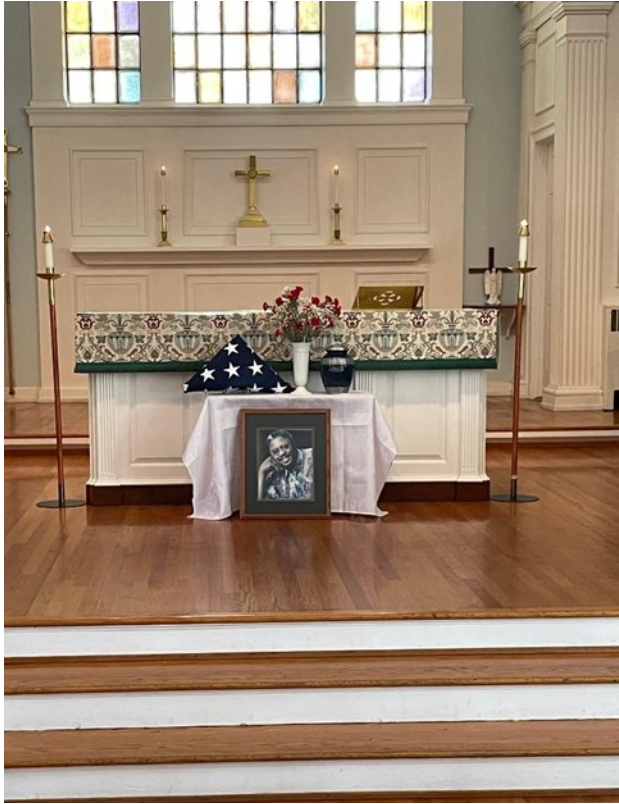
CELEBRATIONS FOR LOVED ONES RECENTLY LOST

Edith Mamet - July 26, 1932 - October 20, 2023

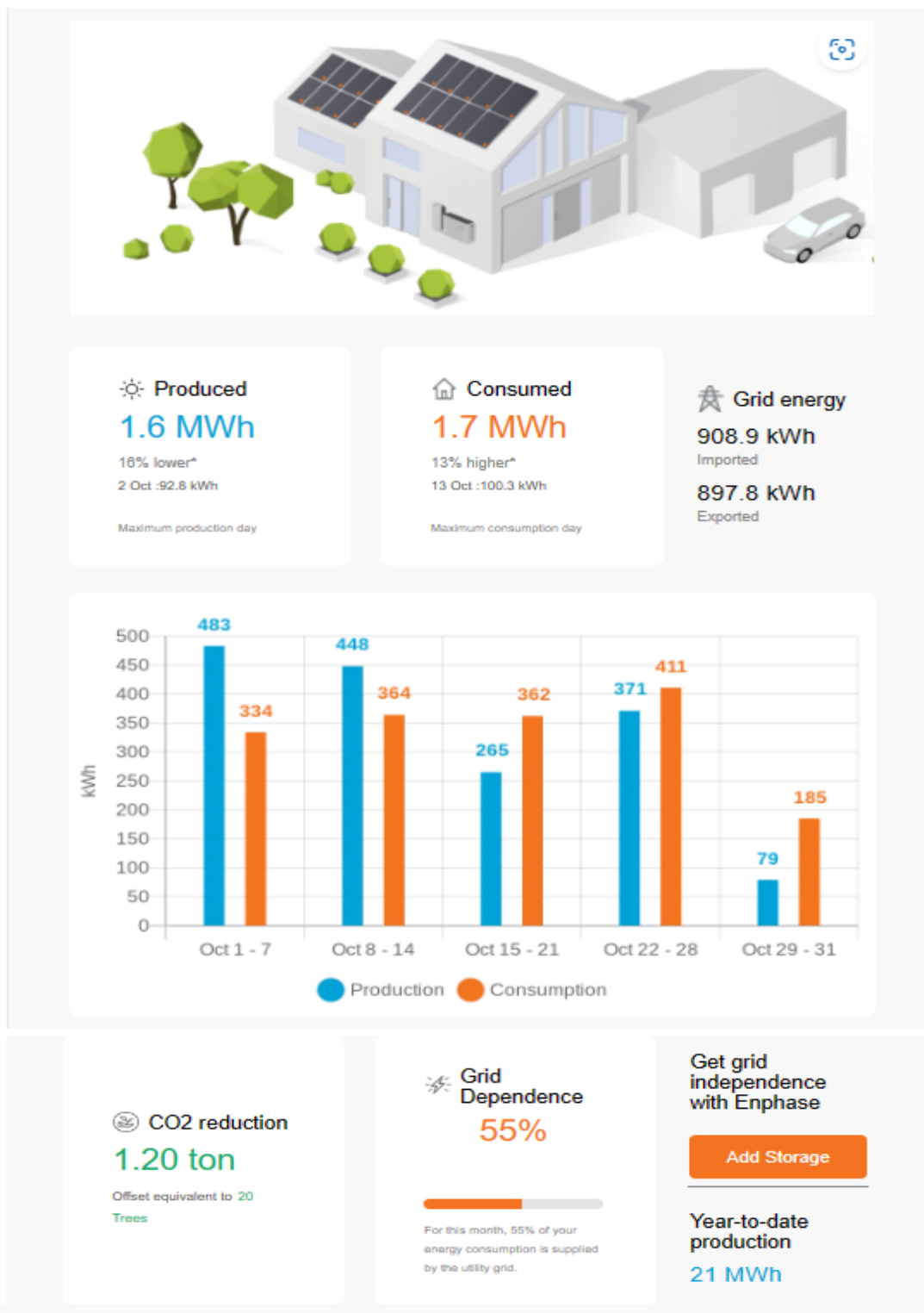


CELEBRATIONS FOR LOVED ONES RECENTLY LOST

Billie Frank Jackson, Sr. - November 30, 1943 - October 7, 2023



SOLAR PANEL REPORT— October 2023



* As compared to last month's records

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DECEMBER 2023 BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES!

Happy Birthday to all who's
birthday is in December!



Happy
Anniversary!

Rodney Carr &
Emma Coleman Carr

*May you all be blessed as you celebrate your
special days!*

Did we miss your birthday or anniversary? Contact the office at 860-527-7792 or email office.gracelutheranhartford@gmail.com to update our records.

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

DECEMBER 3RD - GHIAA Core Group meeting at Urbans - 2 to 4 p.m.

DECEMBER 17TH—Deadline for getting your order in for Christmas Poinsettias is December 17th. Order Forms are available. Each plant is \$23.

DECEMBER 24TH—
CHRISTMAS EVE Day—10 A.M. SERVICE
CHRISTMAS EVE—7 P.M. SERVICE



Grace Lutheran Church – Readers for December, 2023

Note: If you are unable to read on your assigned Sunday, please switch with someone else.

Date	Reading #	Reading	Reader	Notes
12/3	1	Isaiah 64: 1-9	Dorothea Glatte	
	2	1 Corinthians 1: 3-9	David Eberly	
	Psalm	Psalm 80: 1-7, 17-19	Alternating Pastor/Congregation	
12/10	1	Isaiah 40: 1-11	Gladys Jackson	
	2	2 Peter 3: 8-15a	Nina Kretschmer	
	Psalm	Psalm 85: 1-2, 8-13	Read in Unison	
12/17	1	Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11	Barbara Ruhe	
	2	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24	Rodney Carr	
	Psalm	Song – My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness – ELW 251	ALL	
12/24	1	2 Samuel 7- 1-11, 16	Rebecca Lewis	Christmas Eve Day
	2	Romans 16: 25-27	Lou Oliver	
	Psalm	The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came Down ELW 265	ALL	
12/24	1	Isaiah 9: 2-7	Dale Eberhardt	Christmas Eve
	2	Titus 2: 11-14	Dorothea Glatte	
	Psalm	Psalm 96	Rodney Carr	



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Lloyd Smith, Lay Minister

Betsy DeRoma, President

Lou Oliver, Vice President

Dale Eberhardt, Treasurer

Judy Butterworth-Kremer, Secretary

Janice Potter, Financial Assistant

Dale Eberhardt, Organist

Emma Coleman-Carr, Altar Guild

www.graceistheplace.org

