

Lift *together*

Olsburg-Walsburg Lutheran Parish

January 2022

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Reflections by Pastor Keith

Happy new year! We are off and running in a new year. What do you think this year will be like? Is there anything we can say for sure about this year? Any words of wisdom?

There is something we can say. It is a sure and certain word. It is a word we want to say boldly and confidently. It is a word we want to say today and throughout the year. The word is this: 2022 shall be a year of grace!

The Bible in John 1:14 says, *"The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth."* The Word is Jesus. He was born of Mary and lived among us. He is full of grace and truth! Two verses later we read, *"From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace."* Yes, through Jesus we have all received grace upon grace! Grace in abundance! Grace without end!

What is grace? In confirmation I learned that grace is undeserved love. That is what it is! Grace is not something we can accomplish on our own. Grace is not a reward for doing good. Grace is a gift. A free gift. Jesus brings the grace of God to us.

So let this year be a year of grace! Let this be a year when grace

abounds! Let this be a year when grace charts the course. Let this be a year when grace sets the tone and shapes what we do. With all boldness and confidence let us declare that this new year shall be a year of grace!

In 2022 let all who seek love and acceptance find here, among us, a community of grace. May the stranger who walks through our doors be greeted with open arms. May the grief stricken widow who comes with a heavy heart be lifted up by caring friends who reach out to her in this place. May the prodigal who has been estranged from the church be warmly and graciously welcomed. May the handicapped person who is brushed aside by the world be respected here as a person of worth and value. Yes, may folks find here among us a community of grace in 2022.

In 2022 let the downcast of this world find here, among us, an abundance of grace. May the woman and child whose bruises disclose their abuse at home find here a safe haven and a respite from their terrors. May the abandoned grandfather who hasn't heard from his family in years find honor and respect from the children of our churches. May those who must live with the consequences of wrong choices and bad

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decisions find strength to move forward through the grace they experience here. Yes, may there be an abundance of grace among us in 2022.

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Editor/Parish Coordinator

Shelly Burklund
Cell 785-532-9853
Home 785-468-3370
sburklun@ksu.edu

Interim Pastor

Keith Wiens
Home 785-776-5348
Cell: 785-341-1600
keithw4870@gmail.com

Parish Information

Olsburg 468-3500
olc@olsburglutheran.org
Walsburg 293-5367

In 2022 let those whose lives are broken and shattered find here, among us, a table of grace. May those who are burdened by the mistakes of the past find relief in the bread of forgiveness. May those who are discouraged and disillusioned find hope in the wine of renewal. May those who are alienated from loved ones be reconciled through this meal of togetherness. May there be among us in 2022 a table overflowing with the grace of God.

In 2022 let those of a fearful heart find here a word of grace. May the worker whose skill isn't keeping up with advancing technology, may the single parent who faces a debilitating disease, may the middle-aged couple whose parents can no longer live independently, may all who are fearful hear among us a word of grace, "*be strong, do not fear, for I, the Lord your God, am with you!*" May there be a sustaining word of grace from God in 2022.

In 2022 let all who seek the truth find here, among us, a place where grace abounds. May the child who comes to Sunday school discover here a beautiful Lord and Savior. May the teenager wrestling with conflicting claims of truth find here a safe place to ask the tough questions of life. May the adult who is searching for faith encounter here a whole new world of hope and meaning. May those who are troubled by the perplexing issues of society find here the freedom and the courage to wrestle with those issues. Yes, may be this a place of grace in 2022.

Why grace? Remember what we read in John 1:14. *The Word became flesh and lived among us* - Jesus was born of Mary and lived among us - *and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son* - there in Jesus we see God;

Jesus is the glory of God. The reading goes on. Jesus is *full of grace and truth* - from Jesus you and I receive grace, and not just a little grace, but grace upon grace, a virtual outpouring of grace. From Jesus you and I receive the love of God, the full and complete love of God, undeserved - yes, but so true and so sure. This is why grace must be front and center this year. Grace is what God wants to give to you and to me and to all people everywhere.

So let this be a year of grace! May you and I be filled with the spirit of grace. May we eat and sleep and breathe grace. May we practice grace. May everything we do and say be filled with grace. Let the grace of God be incarnated in us. Let the grace of God live in us and be present in us. Let's declare it now and throughout this new year: 2022 shall be a year of grace!

Keep the faith. Love God. Love others. Be the people of God!

The peace of Christ be with you,
Pastor Keith

Thank You

Many thanks for all the cards and gifts and expressions of Christmas joy and hope that we received during the Christmas season. We are so grateful for each and everyone of you! What a blessing you are! Pastor Keith and Carol

COVID and Online Ministry

The year 2022 year begins with alarming numbers of family members, friends and neighbors being infected with COVID. As such, our online ministry is more important than ever. In 2021 the Olsburg church saw an average of 47 individuals or families view their weekly worship services on their Facebook page. The Walsburg church saw an average of 64 individuals or families view their weekly worship service on their facebook page. Many thanks to Shelly Burklund (Olsburg) and Alicia Schofield (Walsburg) and their

January birthdays and anniversaries

If you know of a member whose birthday is not listed, please contact the church office.

January Birthdays

- 2 Skyler Zoeller (O)
Landry Zoeller (O)
- 3 Darnell Vargo (O)
Tucker Meader (W)
- 6 Gary Holt (O)
- 7 Kenneth Neilson (W)
- 8 Julie Strauss (W)
- 9 Jerry Bohnenblust (W)
Emily Nelson (W)
- 10 Marlene Jenkins (W)
- 15 Jeremiah Brenner (O)
- 16 Ethan Bohnenblust (W)
Madison Hedden (W)
Witten Ricketts (O)

- 18 Russell Berry (W)
Lacy Brown (W)
Chase Gibbs (O)
- 19 Dawson Dick (W)
- 20 Colt Kasselmann (O)
- 25 Bailee Howland (O)
Jan Nelson (W)
- 28 Alan Nelson (W)
- 29 Ryker Befort (O)

January Anniversaries:

- 7 Mike & Debbie Hagenmaier (W)

Members in service

Thank you to these members for their service to the parish during January.

Olsburg

Communion Assistants: 1/16 Kristi Fronce; 1/30 David Gibson

***Lay Readers:** 1/9 April Brenner; 1/16 Tom Nelson; 1/23 Kristi Fronce; 1/30 David Gibson

***Acolytes:** 1/9 Grady Kasselmann; 1/16 Witten Ricketts; 1/23 Creed Kasselmann; 1/30 Addyson Gutsch

Altar Committee January: Kristi Fronce; Deb Lowry

Walsburg

Walsburg Greeters and Ushers:

Dennis & Donise Peterson; Trenton & Lynn Hargrave

Communion Ushers: Rita Nelson & Donise Peterson

***Acolytes:** 1/9 Harper Befort; 1/16 Mason Scofield; 1/23 Teske Nelson; 1/30 Ryker Befort

***Lay Readers:** 1/9 Linda Toomire; 1/16 Mason Scofield; 1/23 Izabel Nelson; 1/30 Lori Rogge

Altar Committee: Donise Peterson

***If you are unable to be present for your assignment, please find a replacement and contact the church office so the correct name will appear in the bulletin.**

assistants for faithfully video recording the weekly worship services. As the virus continues to infect more and more individuals, we may likely see even more people worshipping online.

If you are unable to worship with the congregation on Sunday morning, you may mail your offering to your respective congregation.