

**CHRISTMAS: GOD’S LOVE and GRACE**

Once again we, as Christians, look forward with joyful hearts to celebrate the events that bring such happiness, especially to believers, at Christmas. Once again, we are reminded of God’s great love and grace extended to all of mankind. This is indeed the true meaning of Christmas. The most commonly accepted definition for the word “grace”, when describing God’s grace, is that it is the unmerited favor of God. God’s graces, like his love, are immeasurable gifts to all. Who can know the height, depth, or breadth of them? If it were not for his wondrous grace, where would we find hope today? God extends his grace to all but not all avail themselves of it. Sadly, they who reject God’s grace do thereby also reject his salvation. *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.” Eph. 2:8-9*

In many of his epistle salutations, the Apostle Paul greets the reader with the word grace followed by mercy and peace, from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. That greeting, itself, reaches deeply into the heart of the believer and stirs joy within, thus preparing one’s heart for the receiving of God’s Word.

How beautifully and orderly God has revealed to Paul that it is He (God) who extends his glorious grace (His unmerited favor); also, his mercy (wherein man can come just as he is, with a penitent heart and through the declaration of the gospel receive the forgiveness of his sins in the name and blood of Christ) and lastly peace (which floods the soul with a calm and serenity that passes all understanding). All of these blessings are bestowed upon us by the wonderful unfailing love of God. Truly amazing is God’s grace, and to think that we are the children of such divine love. We have much reason to rejoice in this knowledge. Surely if our hearts were unencumbered with our humanness, spontaneous rejoicing would burst forth from within. We can truly say with the song writer, “Tis Grace hath brought me safe thus far and grace will lead me home.” There in the land where the righteous dwell we will one day rejoice eternally when we fully comprehend that His grace has been greater than all our sins.

Be encouraged by these few words dear child of God and continue to press on. Even though your journey here often becomes so wearisome and it seems your footsteps grow heavy, though you may feel like a failure and you are many times discouraged, prayerfully press on. We cannot give up. We’re going home. I especially want to encourage you dear aged brother and sister in Christ, you who so often struggle with aches and pains and many other afflictions of the body in addition to your spiritual warfare, hold fast. The enemy of the soul (the devil) wages a vicious warfare against you and assails you with many doubts and fears but remember, dear child of God, you are never alone. Jesus cares and gives strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow. Today, even in these troublesome times He tenderly invites you to lean more heavily upon the traveling staff of his wondrous grace and love. *“Soon he will come who has promised and his reward is with him.” Rev. 22:12*

May God, our dear Heavenly Father, remind us all that Christ and our faith in Him makes the eternal Christmas ours.

*May you have a blessed Christmas. God’s Peace be with you.*

Ken Storm, Pastor

Dec 6	Ken Storm	11:00 a.m. - Holy Communion
Dec 13	Dave Lappi	11:00 a.m.
Dec 20	Ken Storm	11:00 a.m. - Sunday School Christmas Program and Service
Dec 24	Christmas Caroling Ken Storm	6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.
Dec 27	Charles Korhonen	11:00 a.m.

## **Church Schedule**

Sunday School and Adult Bible Study @10:00 a.m.

Bible Study                      Wednesday @7:00 p.m.

Church Cleaning                      Jon Lehtinen Team

### **TAPIOLA APOSTOLIC LUTHERAN CHURCH**

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