

# 20 *January* 25

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## Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church Messenger

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### Pastor's Reflection

Tom Brodbeck

2025. For some reason, that year has an aura of significance about that number, I feel as if I should think differently. What is it that catches my heart?

It is a quarter of a century. Wow. That came quickly.

If I'm counting by fives, it is a logical sequence.

In math class I was taught to round my numbers to the nearest five.

Our church will be 110 years old. That's important, but it is not usually the sort of anniversary that drives a major celebration.

It isn't a milestone birthday year for me.

Karen and I will celebrate our 45<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, but you don't usually throw a party for another five years.

Yet the number sticks out. Why is 2025 important? What is going to happen this year?

And then it struck me. That's it!

2025 is important precisely because I don't know what is going to happen yet. I haven't a clue. Ordinarily that might be a cause for stress for this highly organized pastor, but I am not finding that to be true this year. Though I don't know, God does.

That wonderful verse in Jeremiah proclaims "I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord' (Jeremiah 29:11). And though I don't know what those might be, I do know that God will lead me, for as He promised in Isaiah:

'Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it"' (Isaiah 30:21).

So "Welcome 2025!" It's going to be a wonderful year.

# JANUARY OUTREACH CORNER

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## Haitian Community Help & Support Center

### **OUTREACH BREAKFAST BREAK:**

Please Join Us!! Sunday, January 5th during the Sunday school hour The Haitian Community Help and Support Center will be here to tell us about the wonderful work they are doing to help our new neighbors find their way here in Springfield, provide some testimony, and share with us how we can help support their efforts. Please plan to join us.



### **HABITAT FOR HUMANITY ANNUAL HOME FOR HOLIDAYS:**

During the month of January, we will be collecting our spare change to support the Habitat for Humanity's annual Home for the Holidays campaign. Please pick up a blue bank, fill it with your spare change, and return to Grace by Sunday, January 26, 2025. See Sandy Thompson for more information.



### **GIFT CARD COLLECTION FOR SPRINGFIELD CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT (SCSD):**

SCSD continues to be challenged with students and families who are homeless and with many below the poverty line. Their Family Outreach Department is collecting \$10 gift cards to utilize with these families when they just need a little help to get through the weekend or to the next paycheck. If you are interested in helping these families in need and would like to donate **\$10 gift card(s)** to gas stations or grocery stores, please get them to Sandy Thompson by the end of January. Just \$10 cards only please.

# JANUARY OUTREACH CORNER

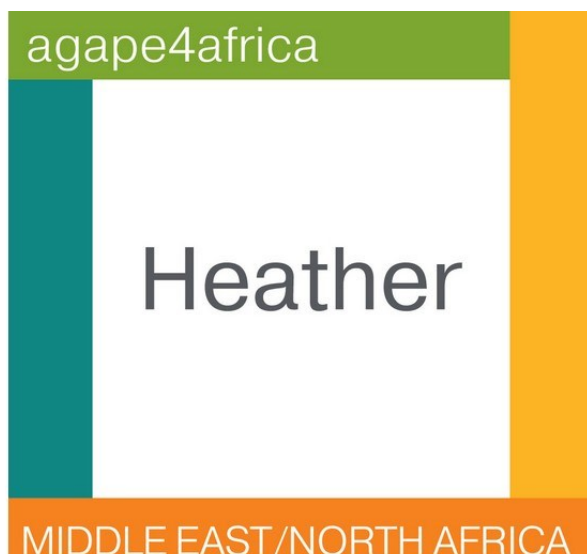
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## **FAMILY ENGLISH PROGRAM UPDATE:**

December 12<sup>th</sup> was our final date for the fall pilot program teaching English to our immigrant neighbors and their families. We had a total of 80 adults registered and 46 children. Attendance did feel the impact of the election and cold weather in the last few weeks. The children played while the adults learned English. Everyone received a snack each night and even a special treat the week before Thanksgiving.

We had 21 different churches represented and over 100 volunteers with 14 coming from Grace, great job Grace!! We had good attention from the Governor's office and even a film documentary crew from LA join us one night to film some of the positive work going on in Springfield with our immigrant families. High Street Nazarene church and Family English was also the recipient of one of the ten driving simulators given to Springfield to help educate our new neighbors on driving. The feedback from the volunteers who participated was overwhelmingly positive with wonderful new relationships built between churches and with our immigrant friends. We are currently working to decide on the next steps and hope to offer three sessions next year, spring, summer and fall. Stay tuned for more information.



## **OPPORTUNITY TO SUPPORT A GLOBAL WORKER FROM SPRINGFIELD**

Heather will be serving in North Africa starting in late January 2025 for about 2 years. If you are interested in learning more about this ministry, please see Pastor Tom or Sandy or follow this link to her web page. Prayers are always needed and much appreciated, so please at least add her to your prayer list for safety and ability to help others know God's love. The Link can also be found in our Grace App under the Links tab.

<https://give.cmfi.org/donate/agape4africa>

# STEPHEN MINISTRY

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## WHAT IS STEPHEN MINISTRY?

Grace has offered Stephen Ministry for nearly 20 years now. But I'm often asked "What exactly is a Stephen Minister?" Stephen Ministers are trained lay caregivers who provide emotional and spiritual support to people going through difficult times in life, providing hope and healing in the midst of their pain.

Stephen Ministers are sometimes called "The After People" because they are there:

After the phone call in the middle of the night that changes life forever

After the baby comes home, demanding more than you ever imagined

After the funeral, when everyone has left, and your emotions come crashing in

After the email announcing a new round of layoffs

After the doctor says, "I'm sorry, but there's nothing else we can do

After the youngest child pulls out of the hug and heads into the dorm—followed by a long drive back to an empty house

After the divorce papers are served

After the fire, when rebuilding a home feels impossible

After family and friends have heard your story one too many times but you still need to talk it out.

To learn more, please talk with Pastor Tom.

## GRACE IS NOW HIRING

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In case you missed the announcement in our November Messenger, Janet Rice is retiring in March of this year. Thank you again to Janet for her excellent work and service on our Grace staff!

If you are interested in applying for this position, you can find the job description and application packet on the front desk in the church office or on our Grace Website: [www.grace-nalc.org](http://www.grace-nalc.org) under the employment tab. Please see Sandy Thompson for more information, [sandy.thompson@grace-nalc.org](mailto:sandy.thompson@grace-nalc.org) or 937-399-6257.

# YOUNG AT HEART

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We enjoyed the music of "Syrodesy Flute Trio "and "Rusted River" in November and early December. We visited Carillon Historical Park in Dayton yesterday. The train and carousel ride were great! Saw inventors of Dayton such as the cash register, bike and the Wright Brothers Bi-plane. The Christmas lights and music put us in the spirit of Christmas!

Caroling at Heart and Home Nursing home brought smiles and love to many seniors.

January 9th " Young At Heart" will team up with the Thursdays Adult Bible Study class for lunch and visit the American's Packard Museum in Dayton. January 17th we will enjoy La Comedia Dinner theater to see " Ghost" the musical. So find time to visit, share fellowship and love one another in Christian love this New Year.

Roger and Sonya



# THANK YOU LETTER

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Thank you so much for all of the cards and prayers following my recent back surgeries. It meant so much to me to feel your concern, and I'm glad to report that the implanted device has made a significant improvement in my pain. Praise God and God bless you all!

Steve Culp



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