Tidings of Peace

come grow with us

Shrewd Grace

January 2026

RALEN M. ROBINSON

https://www.livinglutheran.org/theology-beliefs/shrewd-grace/

We don't usually put the words "shrewd" and "grace" together. They aren't compatible. Rather, they are opposed in character, each carrying its own connotations that divide them into separate categories. The word "shrewd" rolls off the tongue; its sharp sound reflects the closed-off, incisive nature it evokes. Whereas the word "grace" caresses the mouth—it's gentler, softer and flows through the air, offering reassurance. Yet, when you piece those words together, a powerful concept emerges that penetrates the soul and allows God's love to move. This grace is active, engaging and dynamic. Shrewd grace is God's love in motion; it's a grace that doesn't sit quietly but instead engages the world as it is.

Shrewd grace is both tender and clever, practical, and resourceful enough to navigate and move through this messy, unjust, broken world. It's the firm and yet compassionate, wise grace that asks one, "How can love make a difference in this situation despite the predicament?" Shrewd grace is bold. It takes our talents and gifts, then puts them to work for God's kin-dom. It loves deeply beyond depths, sees sharply and acts astutely.

Christ dares us to hold both the sharpness of shrewdness and the gentleness of grace side by side.

One can easily wag a finger at and condemn the stark stories of the dishonest manager in the Gospel of Luke and Jesus with a woman caught in adultery in the Gospel of John. How

many times have we effortlessly been the one at the end of the finger, wagging it at those we deemed as wrongdoers, unwilling to help but judge? Or have even been the culprits, intentionally choosing transgressions over transformation, hiding behind ease and excuses. Yet, Jesus doesn't condemn or judge either situation—he extends shrewd grace. Not one of meekness, but one which disarms devilish deviances that steer us away from God's direction. This direction allows us to be transformed.

Look at the transformation led by God in the healing relationship of Jacob and Esau in Genesis. For decades jealousy consumed the brothers, hatred hardened their hearts and ill contempt tore them apart. Until God gave them reconciliation, hatred may have driven them together that day, but love mended their heart in the form of an embrace that enveloped them. Everything changes when God steps in and disarms us.

The paradox Jesus sets before us is that God's grace is not only tender but also shrewd. And maybe it's not a contradiction at all but the grace we need in the world around us. We may be embarking on a new year, but the world is still broken. There are people who are still ignored, hurt, beaten down by societal standards, and who find comfort in complacency. It's tempting to separate ourselves and look down, blindly ignoring those who are hurting, holding on to our righteous indignation because we are right. It's easy to walk around with our biases, blame and battle wounds, but God calls us to let them go.

Then we can see life differently in a lens that is both boundless and bounded. This embodiment appears to be forgiveness, but it also sets boundaries to secure one's safety. Grace is not weak but powerful. It offers not only assistance but resources to help individuals thrive. It's easy to give money, but it's another thing to teach them how to manage it. Simply giving can be fleeting, but to give from love takes root, forms and grows. It can shape a person into who God calls us to be—a people who are led to the power of God's healing faith in an assembly that cares for one another lovingly and mercifully. It's both giving generously when you're able to share, showing restraint, and then teaching how to be economical and conscious. It's a reconciliation with established parameters of protection. Setting boundaries of reconciliation that don't cause further harm. God doesn't desire us to be in places or situations that harm us, but to be loved and protected. It's forgiving but not forgetting; it balances both mercy and forgiveness, then allows God to equip us through the tension to the resolution. Ultimately, it allows us not to see the hurt and pain or the wrongdoing but the person, our siblings in Christ.

When we embrace shrewd grace, we begin to see both the beauty and complexity in every person and predicament. We learn to hold truth and compassion together, responding with love that is both wise and courageous. This kind of grace is not passive, weak or timid but active, brave and discerning. This concept challenges us to set boundaries that protect, to forgive without forgetting and to care for others. This is the kind of grace that Christ entrusts to us, a grace the world desperately needs right now. Shrewd grace is not just a word—it's a way to live in a longing world.

Ralen M. Robinson is pastor of Reformation Lutheran Church in Wichita, Kan.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Articles Due for February Tidings: January 19th

Annual Congregational Meeting: January 25th

Noisy Bucket Offering: January 25th

Peace Annual Meeting

The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on January 25th

Volunteers Needed!

The worship team is looking for volunteers to deliver the "message" during worship. You can prepare your own message or one can be prepared for you. Please contact Scott Myckowiak if you would like to volunteer!

Men's Breakfast

We will meet at the Eaton Place for breakfast and fellowship on… **Thursday, January 8th at 8:30am.**
Hope to see you there!

Men's Night Out

Men's night out is back! Tuesday, January 27th at 6:00 pm

Ladies Luncheon

Wednesday, January 21st
11:30 am at Evelyn Bay

Are you Interested in Serving on Church Council?

New Council Members Needed for This Year
As we are rapidly approaching the end of the year (already!), two Council positions will need to be filled. Council meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 7 pm. If interested, please reach out to any current member of Council or Kathy Cook.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

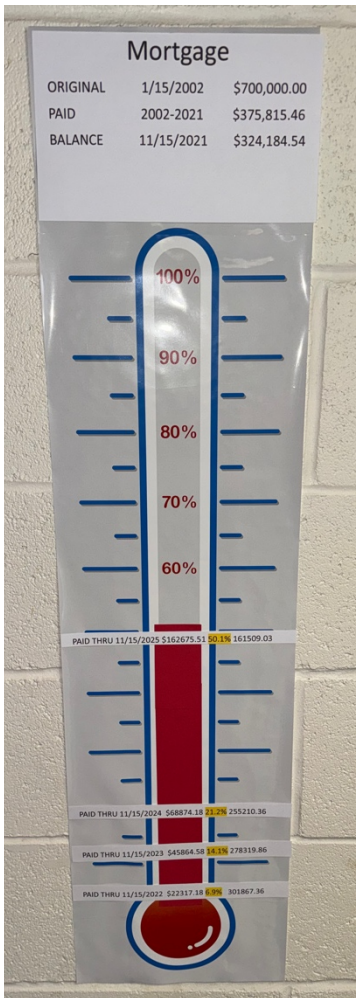
The next Women's Bible Study meeting is **January 10th at 10:30 am.**

For more details contact Sandy Hassen.

Thank You so much for the gift at Christmas Time! It was very generous and very unexpected! Thank you ALL for all of the support you give me in the office! Have a Happy New Year!

Kathy

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS??



This thermometer is a visual look at the church mortgage. The original mortgage was in January of 2002 for the construction of the new sanctuary, pastor's office, narthex and bathrooms as an addition to the existing building. The mortgage was for $700,000. It took almost 20 years to pay the first half of the mortgage. In November of 2021 the remaining balance of $324,000 was refinanced for 15 years with a 5 year balloon payment due in November of 2026.

The balance as of December 2025 is $155,000. This huge reduction in the balance was accomplished by several large one-time payments on the principal along with some members of the congregation also making monthly or annual donations toward the principal. With the current vacancy of a pastor, it was decided to use some of the funds which would be used to pay a pastor to help reduce the balance even further. The mortgage will be reviewed with the bank in the second half of 2026 for any changes needed for the remaining 10 years on the mortgage. The more we can reduce the balance before this review the better position we will be in.

COOKIE WALK/BAKE SALE/BAZAAR

We have a final report for the Cookie Walk/ Bake Sale/ Bazaar!

The total from this event was $2,405.77. Helping Hands will receive $241 as a tithe to our charity of choice. After deduction of $37.02 to cover expenses, the balance of $2,127.75 will be used for Mortgage Reduction. Again, we could not have achieved this success without the help and support of the Congregation. THANK YOU!!

WEST FUND

The West Fund started the year with $832.04 and grew at one time to $1,170.04 thanks to generous donations. $37.00 was given for partial expenses for a night's lodging for a homeless man. The West Fund committee decided that over $1170 sitting in the bank was helping no one so $300 was given to Helping Hands. Then the committee received a request for help for someone in the congregation. Hoorah. This is exactly what the West Fund is for. We do not often see that someone might need a little boost. That is why the committee asks the congregation to let us know if they see someone in the congregation that might need a little help. This year $200 in Meijer Scrip cards was given to those in the congregation and $100 for four $25 Scrip gas cards for the office. We thank those that have donated to the West Fund. Sure would like to get rid of the 4 cents!

2025 West Fund as of December 18, 2025

$832.04 balance at beginning of year
$375.00 donations received
$1207.04
-$637.04 donations given out
$570.04 to begin 2026

*There may be more donations coming in this year so 2026 may begin with more than $570.04

Serve God and Others in Worship

Each week it takes many of God's people working together to make worship happen-and there is a place for you! Join the ministry of worship by serving as an usher, reader, worship assistant or serve on the altar guild. You may want to be a Gathering Host. **Sign up sheets are located in the Gathering Area.** You are welcome to join any of the teams at Peace. The teams are the Caring Team, Community in Action Team, Finance Team, Growing in Faith Team, Personnel/IT Team, Property Team and the Worship Team. Please contact the office if you are interested in this ministry.

PREGNANCY CENTER

Peace has been very generous to the Pregnancy Center of Eaton County, and they are always appreciative of what we have to offer. Bev DeFord delivers handcrafted baby blankets to them every month. The donation box (just inside the fellowship room) is always a treat to see what has been donated to the pregnancy center. Those donations are taken to the pregnancy center monthly. Three Thrivent grants were used this year to buy wipes and diapers. Each time 90 packs (90 in a pack) were ordered. 8,100 x 3 grants is a lot of wipes. A box of 172 size 5 diapers was ordered each time. Interesting information about the size five diapers. The center hands out more size 5 diapers than all the other sizes combined. It seems those youngsters begin wearing size 5 early and continue to wear them for a long time. Thank all of you who have donated items to the Pregnancy Center.

VISITATION MINISTRY

The Caring Team is asking for help with a Visitation Ministry in reaching out to our members. We need volunteers to visit people in the congregation that have difficulty in getting to church on a regular basis. Visitors would go out in teams of two and would be making one visit per month. Each month you would be visiting a different member, and your visiting partner might change. You will receive a schedule of who and what week to visit and who is your visiting partner. Your responsibility is to get with your visiting partner and contacting the member to set up a visitation time. Then to go and enjoy learning more about one of our members.

After making a visit you will realize that you are the one that have been blessed. This is a ministry where you receive more than you give.
Please contact Char Ehlers if you are interested in this ministry.

Staples

When buying ink from Staples for you or your family please consider using Peace's phone number when checking out. Your purchase of ink can apply to Peace's Rewards program. The office uses the rewards dollars for supplies for our church.

RECYCLE EVERY DAY

TECH

Adapters & hubs
Apple® AirTag® trackers
Battery backup devices
Cable/satellite receivers
Calculators
Car & wall chargers
CD/DVD/Blu-ray discs & players
Coffee brewers (less than 40 lb.)
Computers & Mac®
Computer speakers
Connected home devices
Digital & video cameras
Digital projectors
Earbuds & AirPods®
Fax machines
Flash drives
Gaming consoles & controllers
GPS devices
Hard drives
Headphones & headsets
Keyboards & mice
Label makers
Laminators
Laptops & MacBook®
Mobile phones & iPhone®
MP3 players & iPod®
Printers & multifunction devices
Routers & modems

TECH (CONT.)

Scanners
Shredders
Small servers
Smart speakers & HomePod®
Smart watches & Apple Watch®
Stereo receivers
Streaming devices & Apple TV®
Stylus pens & Apple Pencil®
Tablets, iPad® & eReaders
USB & Lightning® cables
Webcams

PRINTER CARTRIDGES

Ink cartridges
Toner cartridges & drum units

BATTERIES

Rechargeable batteries
Single-use batteries **NEW**

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Backpacks & lunch bags **NEW**
Crayons & colored pencils **NEW**
Glue sticks & bottles (empty) **NEW**
Pencils & pencil pouches **NEW**
Pens, markers & highlighters **NEW**
Poly folders & binders (empty) **NEW**
Rulers & drafting tools **NEW**

EVEN MORE

Bags & luggage **NEW**
Phone & iPhone cases
Tablet, iPad & eReader cases
Smart watch & Apple Watch bands
SodaStream® CO_2 cylinders

FOR A FEE

Monitors up to 49" ($19.99 each)*
Shredding (cost per lb.)
*Fee not applicable in CA, CT, NC, NY, PA and RI.

Download the Staples® app to track your recycling, earn points with Easy Rewards™ and more.

WHAT CAN'T BE RECYCLED IN STORE

Air conditioners, floor-model printers & copiers, home & kitchen appliances, lamps & bulbs, large servers, large speakers, medical devices, records & record players, scissors & other blades, smoke detectors, televisions or vaporizers.

Store management has the right to refuse to accept items that may pose a health or safety risk. When you recycle your eligible electronic device at Staples, you relinquish all ownership rights in the device when you give it to Staples to be recycled. Additionally, Staples is not responsible for any data left on the device turned in for recycling. You are solely responsible for removing data from your device, and you acknowledge that submission of a device for recycling is at your sole risk. When you give your device to Staples for recycling, you further represent that you either: (1) are the sole owner of the electronic device and of any data that was on the electronic device before you deleted all such data prior to recycling; or (2) have permission to proceed with recycling from all other owners of the electronic device or of any data that was on the electronic device before you deleted all such data prior to recycling.

Helping Hands Ministry

For the month of January, we are collecting **dinner sides**. A basket has been placed in the gathering area in front of the Helping Hands Ministry bulletin board to place donations. Thank you for your support!

CHURCH CLEANING SERVICE

Bryce Dickinson is cleaning the church. He is not an employee of the church. The cost to have Bryce clean our church is **$60 every two weeks**.

A Church Cleaning By-Weekly Schedule has been set up beginning last October. Payments of $60 per pay period are due the first Saturday of the period and are is to be written to Bryce Dickinson and placed in his mailbox at Church.

Please indicate on your check the weeks you are paying for.

The sign-up sheet has been posted on the Church Bulletin Board. Beginning With the October cleaning.

Thank you for your help in keeping our Church cleaned.

If you have any questions, please contact the Property Team.

Did you know that we recycle pull tabs here at Peace?

Pull tabs are taken to the Ronald McDonald House in Lansing

They turn these tabs in to cash to help support the House. The House provides care, comfort, and a free place to stay for families to heal together while their child receives medical treatment.

This is a simple way to help support the House, just pull those tabs off the cans and **place them in the container at church** and Dar will see that they get over to Ronald McDonald House.

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After making a visit you will realize that you are the one that have been blessed. This is a ministry where you receive more than you give.
Please contact Char Ehlers if you are interested in this ministry.

Thanks for volunteering to be a Gathering Host.

You don't need to provide an entire meal, just prepare the coffee and bring a small treat like cookies! The coffee is provided by the church!!! Any questions ask anyone on the worship team.

- With Jim & Louise no longer cleaning the Church, the Property team is asking the Gathering hosts to do a little more. The following is a list of items we would like them to do:
  - Wipe off any crumbs or spills on the tables and chairs with sanitizer solution.
  - Unplug coffee pot and warmer, empty grounds & clean pots.
  - Fill & run dishwasher.
  - Wash and put away dishes.
  - Clear off counters & wipe with sanitizer solution.
  - Sweep up any crumbs and wipe up any spills on the floor.
  - Straighten chairs.
- If you have any questions about cleaning up, please ask Joe Crigier

Worship Ministry
January 2026

Date	Sunday 1/4	Sunday 1/11	Sunday 1/18	Sunday 1/25
Altar Guild	Brenda Morris	Brenda Morris	Brenda Morris	Brenda Morris
Audio/ Visual	Scott and Connie Lumbert	Scott and Connie Lumbert	Scott and Connie Lumbert	Scott and Connie Lumbert
Choir Director/ Musician	Bryan Guarnuccio	Bryan Guarnuccio	Bryan Guarnuccio	Bryan Guarnuccio
Fellowship	Rosalie Bazzett Kathy Cook	Scott and Connie Lumbert	**Volunteer Needed**	**Volunteer Needed**
Flowers	**Volunteer Needed**	Dian Leckrone	**Volunteer Needed**	**Volunteer Needed**
Lector	Lorene Crigier	Lorene Crigier	Lorene Crigier	Lorene Crigier
Pastor	Stacy Leiby	Pastor Dave Augenstein	*To Be Announced*	Pastor Dave Augenstein
Ushers	Joe Crigier Steve Cook	Joe Crigier Steve Cook	Joe Crigier Steve Cook	Joe Crigier Steve Cook
Worship Assistant	Cathey Levi	Cathey Levi	Cather Levi	Cathey Levi

Church Calendar – January 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4 9:30 am Worship 10:30 Gathering	5	6 7:00 pm CAT Team Meeting	7 11:30 am Caring Team Meeting 6:00 pm AA Meeting	8 8:30 am Men's Breakfast 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	9	10 10:30 am Women's Bible Study
11 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Gathering 10:45am Sunday School	12	13 10:00 am Worship and Music Team Meeting 7:00 pm Council Meeting	14 1:00 pm IT/Personnel Team Meeting 6:00 pm AA Meeting	15 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	16	17
18 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Gathering	19 Articles Due for the February Tidings	20	21 11:30 am Ladies Luncheon @ Faye's Evelyn Bay 6:00 pm AA Meeting	22	23	24
25 NOISY BUCKET OFFERING 9:30 am Worship 10:30 Gathering 10:45 am Sunday School ANNUAL MEETING	26	27 6:00 pm Men's Night Out	28 6:00 pm AA Meeting	29	30	31

Please feel free to submit articles or pictures for the Tidings to the editor, Kristin Shannon gore.kristin88@gmail.com

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Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and love your neighbor as yourself.

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