



THE FRIENDLY VISITOR

Grace Lutheran Church



Companion Congregation
Msindo Parish in Tanzania

January 18, 2011

A Stephen
Ministry Congregation

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith ... “ Hebrews 12: 1-2a

Almost exactly a year ago, on a cold, dark, February night I drove into Des Moines. Actually, I missed the turn at the mixmaster, ended up downtown, took a right because I remembered someone saying Grace was on the north side, discovered Beaverville, guessed at Douglas, turned left at 52nd, and found Grace ... literally. And I have been finding grace here ever since. (Of course I didn't stop and ask for directions!)

My subsequent discovery made me treasure the above verse from Hebrews even more. Whenever a pastor arrives at a new place, there is a wondering about what/who will be found there. I found Grace and grace-full people.

“Thanks” are dangerous. Someone may feel left out. Please don't. I simply mean to express my gratitude to groups with so many of you in them. The staff welcomed me into their circle. We laughed, planned, wondered, prayed together. I treasure them. I got to sing in a choir again! Bible Study ... you let me teach and tell stories. I asked you to think deeper than the words on the page, and you did. Revelation!!! When will the end of it all come? (You will have to ask a member of that group for the answer!)

I hadn't been to Bible Camp in years. It was a great week with five young women. We added another for Confirmation. I will remember them, and more. Baptisms, weddings, funerals ... you let me a part of your lives. Circles fed me. So did the men's group. So did Josephina! I came to treasure our Latino families, who are such an important part of Grace; new members, many of them young; couples counseled before weddings, which I will not be privileged to do; our 15-20 homebound members, who let me come and give them the greatest gift of all ... the presence of Jesus in a little bread and wine. Their faith is amazing. They, too, are part of the “great cloud of witnesses.”

Your good church council and an excellent call committee have done their jobs well. You will vote on calling a young man to be your next pastor at the Annual Meeting January 30. You and he will be in my prayers before and after that day. Sunday, February 6, will be my last day here. Each time I've looked out at you on Sunday mornings I have been grateful to be “surrounded”. Then my work is done here. Good memories remain.

Give thanks for “the Cloud” that is Grace Lutheran Church. Work hard at inviting new faces into that “cloud”. Run well the race of life, always following Jesus, going wherever He leads, traveling with whomever He places in your midst.

I cannot leave you without sharing one more piece from Gerhard Frost.

Morning has broken, long shadows are receding; time for today's resolution: With the Spirit's help, I will remember that the toughest, most resilient and tenacious, most stubborn and unyielding fact that I'll encounter this day is the eternal, all-embracing love of God.

Pastor Tim Johnson

**Pastor Johnson's time with us has been short, but oh, so SWEET!!!
Join us for cake & coffee on Sunday, February 6th, 9:30-10:30 a.m. as we say
“Farewell & Thank You!!!”
A basket will be available for cards or notes for Pastor Johnson.**

2011 Annual Congregational Meeting
January 30, 12:00 p.m.
Important Meeting - Be Sure to Attend
Luncheon served by the youth will be followed by the annual business meeting.
The Council will make a recommendation to the congregation to extend a call to
Pastor Michael Schmidt to serve as pastor of Grace Lutheran Church.
Babysitting will be provided during the meeting in the Church Library by our middle school youth.

Grace Council Meeting Minutes – December 28, 2010

Attending: Mary Freimuth Helt, Rich Snyder, Carla Peterman, Kathy Bowermaster, Joyce Lewis, Gary Nehmer
Mary opened the meeting with Psalm 23.

Agenda was revised to include:

- Discussion on recognition of Jackie for 10 years service.
- Discussion of recognition to Pastor Tim.
- Discussion of 2010 Benevolence to the Synod.
- Drop the Roof Repairs discussion as no one attending had further information.

Staff reports discussions:

Stephanie's report:

- Motion was made, seconded and passed to approve her request to publicize the "Backpack Buddies" program.

Jackie's report:

- Council noted her comment concerning the postcard program and recognize the need for greater communication to the congregation about this program as it moves forward (Easter).
- We discussed Jackie's service to the congregation (10 years!) and determined recognition by way of a note in the Friendly Visitor, which Mary will author, would be a good way to let the congregation know. We will also present her with a Gift card (Kathy volunteered to investigate an appropriate store / restaurant).

2011 Budget - A motion was made, seconded and passed - "Recommend the 2011 Budget be presented to the Congregation at the Annual Meeting as prepared by the Finance Committee, with one change - renaming of the Latino Ministry position to "Latino Communications Coordinator."

2010 Synod Benevolence - A motion was made, seconded and passed - "Restore the 2010 Synod Benevolence to \$40,309." As part of the discussion concerning the success in 2010 to restore the Benevolence to the Synod it was recommended to ask a member or members of the Stewardship Drive to do a Temple Talk to the Congregation to give an update on Grace's progress (Give Thanks!).

Call Committee update - Rich reported the Call Committee is involved in a second interview with the leading candidate on December 29th. The Council is invited to join the candidate at 7:30 p.m. at the church to meet him/her. We also discussed the possibility of using the Annual Meeting to make a Call, pending everything is ready at that point. The process will be the Call Committee makes a recommendation to the Council and then, if approved, the Council makes a recommendation to the Congregation to extend a Call.

Latino Ministry Committee update - Ro and Barb Zimany have agreed to serve with Julie on the committee.

Personnel Committee update:

- Staff reviews - Council would like these to be completed by January 14th.
- Staff Job Descriptions - Council would like these to be completed by January 14th.
- The form to use for the Job Descriptions has been completed by the committee.

Changes in the By-Laws - Update was simply these changes will be part of the Annual meeting.

Youth Fundraiser - The Youth would like to raise monies for the Youth Emergency Shelter Services (YESS) at coffee hours during January.

Annual Meeting - date set as January 30th. Also discussed using the Annual meeting as a forum to recognize Pastor Tim for all he has done for the members of Grace.

Council Members - Four positions need to be filled. Carla and Rich have agreed to place their names for nomination.

Evaluation of the Year - short discussion on some of the goals we had for 2010 and what was accomplished and what was not. Members in attendance agreed that the Grace prayer was thought to be very helpful in grounding us and the congregation. It was recommended to continue a prayer for Grace during services.

Next Year's calendar - we reviewed the calendar Mary outlined. We agreed the Council Retreat should be done in February (tentatively the 19th or 26th), versus March. We all thought it was a great way to get the Council members on the same track for the year. Obviously we'd like the new Pastor to be able to join us, if possible.

Tentative agenda discussed:

- 1 - Bible Study - Servant leaders
- 2 - Review Congregation survey
- 3 - Gap assessment for the church congregation
- 4 - Congregational skill building

Adjourned with the Lord's Prayer

These minutes have not yet been approved by the Council.

Upcoming learning opportunities....

Please note that the registration costs of each of the following opportunities will be funded by the Lay Ministry Team in support of lay leadership development. Please see Stephanie Johnson if you are interested in attending any of them.

Hope for the Hungry Symposium

Date: Saturday, January 29

Place: First Christian Church, 2500 University Ave., Des Moines

Time: 9:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.

If you would like to learn more about practical ways we can fight hunger locally, mark your calendars for this day of workshops and presentations about this topic at First Christian Church in Des Moines. Brochures can be found in the Gathering Hall and on the table by the office bulletin board, and they can also be downloaded at www.urbanfooddsm.org. Pre-registration is encouraged, and registration is limited to 100 participants. The registration fee of \$15 before January 23 and \$25 at the door includes a box lunch.

Workshop topics include Community Gardens, Urban Farms, School Gardens, Faith Gardens, Local Food Policy, Food Rescue, Urban Chickens, Farm to School, Nutritious Meal Preparation, and Food Preservation.



St. John's Lay School of Theology

Date: Saturday, February 19

Place: St. John's Lutheran Church, 780 Court Ave., Marengo, IA 52301

Time: 10:00 a.m.- 2:30 p.m.

This annual "Day of Theological Reflection" is an educational arm of St. John's Lutheran Church and is designed for pastors and laity alike. The speaker is Dr. Joel Biermann, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, and the topic is "Living in the Two Kinds of Righteousness". The benefits of this study, designed for practical application and based on the book of Galatians, are for congregations and individuals striving to live lives of faithful discipleship. The registration cost of \$25 includes lunch. More information and registration forms can be found in the Gathering Hall and on the table by the office bulletin board.



CTIM (Called Together in Mission)

Deep Roots: Christian Worship in Our Local Places

Date: Saturday, March 12

Place: First Lutheran Church, 1000 3rd Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52403

Registration: \$25 includes lunch, **Registration deadline** is February 28

Time: 9:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.

Join other members of the synod for this annual resource event for congregations!

This year CTIM welcomes the Rev. Dr. Benjamin Stewart, the Gordon A. Braatz Assistant Professor of Worship and Dean of the Chapel at Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC). Dr. Stewart's keynote address will be followed by a Bible study he is preparing based on

Psalm 104. Attendees will have the opportunity to attend workshops on subjects ranging from expressing one's faith through the arts to youth and family ministry to middle east peace to geothermal energy. Hard copies of the booklet and registration form are available in the Gathering Hall and on the table by the office bulletin board, and a link can also be found on Grace's website, www.gracedm.org.



DMARC Food Drive Report

During the Christmas season, Grace participated in a food drive to help combat hunger in the Des Moines area. Thanks to your generosity, 196 items and \$492 were donated to DMARC to help feed the hungry. Many thanks for being a blessing to others.

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink ... Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." (Matthew 25:35, 40)

Welcome New Grace Members

Ardis Schmelzer
Amy Schmelzer
Amy Kamies
Scott Neal
Milton Heiser
Kristen Langer
Bill Marberry

In Our Hearts and Prayers

Condolences to the family of Gene and Lucy Krauss on the death of Marie Vogel, sister of Gene. Marie died the day after Christmas in Phillipsburg, KS at the age of 99.

Thank You's

Many thanks to those folks who sent me Christmas cards and for the beautiful poinsetta. All was appreciated. Thank you and God bless.
LeRoi Beers

A huge thank you to all who brightened our Christmas celebration this year: to the 3rd & 4th graders who made the precious cards Pastor Tim brought along on his welcomed Communion visit, to our "Friends at Grace Lutheran Church" for the musical card we have both enjoyed, and for the gorgeous poinsettia plant that was delivered after Christmas. Thank you, thank you to all for your thoughtfulness!

Del & Lynn Niemuth

Words are not enough to express our sincere gratitude for the generosity of the people of Grace Lutheran Church this past Christmas. The individuals that receive supports in our group homes had a much brighter and merrier Christmas thanks to the wonderful gifts your congregation donated and placed under the tree. God's love and grace truly are reflected in you all. Thank you for all you do for the people of Mosaic and for your continued care and support. In His Name,
The Staff and Clients of Mosaic

Thank you for the nice Christmas gifts. Your thoughtfulness is very much appreciated.

Love,
Erika Richards
(Erika is a resident at Mosaic.)

SAVE THE DATE FOR VBS!

This year's Vacation Bible School theme is a mystery still to be revealed... but the dates are set for this fun-filled week of Bible stories, games, and activities for children ages 3 through those currently in grade 5. We are excited about making it another joint effort with Bread of Life Church again as well. Mark your calendars and stay tuned for details....

Dates: Monday, June 27 – Friday, July 1

Time: Morning program with an afternoon option

The VBS Planning Team members are Beth Flannery, Stephanie Johnson, MeLissa Lawson, and Kristin Medhurst.

Join the fun!

Ministry Opportunities

Lutheran World Relief

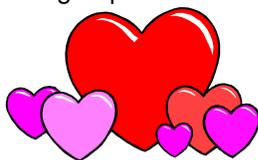
Do you have an interest in missions? Would you like to have the opportunity to impact people's lives around the globe? Then maybe serving on the LWR Committee is for you! For more information about what this entails, please see Pat Bordt, the current LWR Chair. After the Spring Drive, Pat will be stepping down as chair, but will be happy to train a new person before then, and new members of the committee are welcome as well. Might God be calling you to serve in this way?

Sunday Morning Coffee Servers

If you enjoy talking to people and making others feel comfortable, then you might enjoy serving coffee and treats between worship services on Sunday mornings. We could use your help and will welcome any new servers. If you have questions about the responsibilities, please see Karen Taylor or Ross Peeler. Sign-up sheets are in the worship volunteer book at Volunteer Central in the Gathering Hall and also on a table in Grace Hall 1 on Sunday mornings. Is hospitality ministry knocking at your door?

Bible Study Option

All are welcome to join the Sunday morning Bible study group that is currently studying the book of 1 Corinthians. It is a Book of Faith study published by Augsburg Fortress and led by Carla Peterman. The theme is "Being the Body of Christ". It is a four-week session that started on January 9, and you are welcome to join at any time. Because of some adjustments in the schedule, please check with Carla about the remaining dates of the study or stay tuned for further details. The group meets at 9:30 a.m. in the Esperanza Café.





February Birthdays

- 1 Larry Cramer
Timothy Johnson
Sophia Royster
- 2 Richard Johansen
Kathlina Roat
- 3 Jolene Wiegmann
- 4 Matt Farrell
- 5 Todd Ringgenberg
Andrew Trentmann
- 6 James Hoffman
Larry Nordeen
Karri Brandsfield
- 8 Leonard Larsen
- 9 Virginia Naney
- 10 LeRoi Beers
Carol Rudisill
Bonnie Swanson
Eric Oberg
- 11 Kent Weaver
- 12 Lenora Iverson
Tyler Peeler
- 13 Timothy Hummel
- 15 Patricia Rehder
Diane Heid
Isaac McCleary
- 16 Robert Barks
Jane Cantrell
Heather Ashton
- 17 Gail Peterson
- 18 Max Palmer
Nicole Vernon
- 19 Ellen Mumm
- 20 Frances Engquist
Betty Maycock
Gerald Dockum
Jessica Flannery
Max Ringgenberg
- 21 Judy Cramer
Neal Meyer
- 22 George Pierce
Julie Stuckle
- 24 Barb Kallestad
Sharyn Nelson
Barbara Burley
Jonathan Rudisill
Leigh Harmon
- 25 Melissa Young
Shane Artzer
- 26 Gayle Olson
Angela Collins
- 27 Elayne Palmer
Jerry Westercamp
- 28 Betty Vance
Dana Johnson

Music Notes.....

2011? I'm not sure that I was totally ready to give up 2010, as it just seemed to fly by. (I'm reminded of my parents saying that the older you get, the faster the years go. You know, they were correct!!) It just seems only yesterday that we were preparing to meet and greet an Interim Pastor and to prepare for Lent. It's hard to believe that an entire year has gone by and now we are preparing for a called pastor and very soon, Lent. Lent is a time of preparation through prayer, self-evaluation, and penitence. We each will do that in our own special way. We soon will begin a new chapter in the ongoing history of Grace Lutheran Church. How will those pages be written and what will they include? As we move forward into 2011 our prayers, support and presence will be even more important. I want to thank the Call Committee for their time, effort, and diligence that they freely gave in this process.

In reflection of the month of December, I was very pleased of all the additional music that was offered by the music groups of Grace and the two extra performances by Southwestern Community College Choir and the Des Moines Diversity Chorus. The extra music that was provided before the Christmas Eve services was inspirational for me. I wish to thank Tyler Reihmann for helping me to provide piano/organ duets before the 5:00 p.m. service and Sarah Reihmann-soprano soloist. The pre-service music at the 11:00 p.m. service was provided by Matt Jordahl, Tyler Reihmann, Kristen Snyder, Rich Snyder, Emmy Scholten, Janet Habick, Trish Jordahl, Sarah Reihmannm Kathy Bowermaster, Jennifer Rehder, Adam Dostalick, and members of the Grace Bells: Carol Woodruff, Kathy Bowermaster, Tyler Reihmann, Kara Jordahl, Kristen Snyder, and Sarah Reihmann. Also, members of the Chancel Choir with Kent Weaver on bass guitar, Carol Woodruff, Kara Jordahl, Nicole Nelson, and Kristen Snyder on bells, Adam Dostalick on synthesizer and Rich Snyder on piano. It is nice to have so many people involved to offer extra music for our congregation and to help prepare for worship.

January is traditionally a slower month for our music groups. Each is preparing music for worship to help highlight the season in which we are currently and for future services. But.....I have been toying with the idea of having a "special" service during the Lenten Season. The idea has been formulating for several months and just recently it started to bloom into a reality. I have mulled it around and asked various people their opinion and by the response it is becoming clearer that it will be a "Meditation" service. The format would include readings, scripture, and music from the Grace Brass, Grace Bells, and Chancel Choir as well as congregational hymns. I have selected a number of pieces of music appropriate for the service and now will begin to "tie" it together. It would be on a Sunday evening toward the end of March, about half-way through Lent. As the idea grows and becomes clearer to me, I will pass the information on to you. I believe it can be a very uplifting service for all.

This last year has been a pleasure to work with Pastor Tim. Our ideas seemed to mesh from the beginning as we talked about worship, the planning of worship, and the construction of those services for the congregation. I am reminded of a song from one of my favorite musicals that I have seen three times. A duet in the show is sung by the witches, Glinda and Elphaba, as they discuss the effect of how people come into our lives for a while and then leave. What effect does that have on each of us? In my life there have been many people that have helped shape life, career, thinking, etc. Hopefully each of those many people has helped us to become better persons. The song is entitled *For Good*. To paraphrase, *People come into our lives for a reason, and because I knew you, I have been changed for good*. Thank you Tim for being here, however long or short it has been. I trust that because you have known us, you too have been changed *For Good*. Go in Peace and God Bless You.

See you in church.
RICH

Sunday School Update

There are some exciting things happening in our Sunday school program. Currently we have ages 3-5 together in one classroom, but due to the wide range of development at those young ages, the 3-year-olds will be having their own class taught by Jim Merkwan beginning on January 23. If you have an interest in helping with that class, please see Jim or any member of the Youth Education Team. We are excited about having new learning environments that will better meet the needs of our youngest Sunday school children. Youth Education Team members are Tammy Denton, Beth Flannery, Julie Honsey, Kara Jordahl, Kristin Medhurst, and Sherry Merkwan.

It is also a busy world for high school youth. We want to provide many opportunities to gather, learn and fellowship together. Beginning Sunday, January 23, there will now be time on Sunday mornings and sometimes Sunday evenings to gather together. Each Sunday morning we will meet in the High School Room from 9:30 -10:30 a.m. This class will be taught by Carol Woodruff. Please watch the bulletin for dates, times and locations for the Sunday evening sessions, or see Beth Flannery. Come to one or come to both. We hope to see you there!

