



THE FRIENDLY VISITOR

Grace Lutheran Church

March 27, 2012

Holy Week Worship

Maundy Thursday
Holy Communion Service
11:00 a.m.

Luncheon served by
Grace Women to follow

Holy Communion Service
First Communion
6:30 p.m.

Good Friday Service
7:00 p.m.

Open Prayer Vigil
Saturday in Upper Room
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Easter Sunday
Holy Communion Services
6:30 a.m., 8:15 a.m.
and 10:45 a.m.

Men In Mission Easter
Breakfast served
7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.
Children's Easter
Activities at 9:30 a.m.

Everyone is Welcome!

Regular Sunday
Worship
8:15 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.
Holy Communion at Both

Education Hour &
Adult Forum at 9:30 a.m.

Tuesday Adult Bible
Study Classes
8:45 a.m.

Contact Us

Pastor Michael Schmidt
pastormike@gracedm.org

Director of Laity Ministries
Stephanie Johnson
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Grace Kids' Care Director
Heather Nelson
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A Great Cloud of Witnesses

I spend time reading from the writings of Archbishop Oscar Romero, The Rev. Dr. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. every year during Lent. They continue to keep me accountable to the heart of the Gospel and motivated in the true liturgy to which we are called.

As I prepare for worship this Sunday, in the midst of Lent, and then look forward to the approaching Holy Week and Resurrection of our Lord, I cannot help but think about these three men who were martyred in the faith, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King Jr., and Oscar Romero. This Saturday, March 24, marks 32 years since the martyrdom of Romero. Holy Wednesday will mark 42 years since the martyrdom of MLK, and Easter Monday will mark 67 years for Bonhoeffer. Having Holy Week and the Resurrection of Our Lord bookended by such dates of memory, I cannot help but find myself thinking a little more deeply about death and resurrection this year.

One of the quotes of Romero to which I cling simply states "We do not believe in death without resurrection." These are words of hope not only during the season of Lent, but also throughout our lives. It is the way that he lived.

During the 6 o'clock hour the evening of March 24, 1980, in the middle of a memorial mass, there was a gunshot that rang throughout the world. The words that were said as he collapsed and died: "May God have mercy on the assassins." Less than one week later more than 250,000 mourners from around the world gathered for the funeral of this fallen martyr, the archbishop of San Salvador, Oscar Romero.

Even thinking about this story is haunting. The scene gives me chills. A small chapel of a hospital, a memorial mass for the mother of a close friend, in the middle of the Eucharist, the words of institution, the very tangible experience of God's grace and mercy, with the presiding minister holding the chalice in the air, this is my blood shed for...and we too are interrupted with the sound of an explosion, the firing of a single .22 caliber round into the heart...the blood spills as the chalice falls...Christ's and his alike...and we are left with those chilling words, "May God have mercy on the assassins."

His message, although spoken to the Salvadoran people, knows no boundaries. The same violence, injustices, systemic oppression, genocide, persecution, poverty and need, the same cross to bear is found throughout the world. We are called into the same struggle as we find our voice in community. As Romero said before his death, "You can tell the people that if they succeed in killing me, that I forgive and bless those who do it. Hopefully, they will realize they are wasting their time. A bishop will die, but the church of God, which is the people, will never perish." We are the church of God, the very body of Christ.

The time of Easter is nearly upon us. We are approaching Holy Week, the betrayal and the cross. May we remember that Christ's words at the time of death and Romero's are essentially the same, "May God have mercy on the assassins (all of us)." Even while dying, Christ was wishing mercy be upon us. On Easter Sunday, we gather in the promise that there is no death without resurrection. May we continue to live in that promise.

Pastor Mike

Blessings on your birthday!

April 2 The Rev. William Kallestad

Michael Heid

3 Colleen McKinney

Dolores Johnson

Ellen Batten

4 Darlene Johnson

7 Bradley Moon

Carolyn Andersen

John Nelson

Emily Woodruff

Maya Uehling Lint

8 Jennie Wonderlin

9 Kelley Marks

10 Matt Hagerty

Mark Stumme

Cherie Rissman

Brett Brindley

Jared Nelson

Lanette Kennebeck

DeVee Trickel

11 Mira Voelker

12 Alex Davik

Kyler Medhurst

13 Alice Nelson

Mary McCann

Mark Meyer

14 Prudence Campbell

15 Matt Speck

Erin Warren

Michael Flannery

16 Ernest Weatherington

17 Cynthia Gronert

18 Mary Donnenwerth

Justin Fenimore

20 Jennifer Rehder

22 Robert Jensen

Donald Peterson

24 Eric Nelson

Charla Preston

25 Amy Wonderlin

26 Howard Kulzer

Michael Carney

Aden Artzer

Nathan Scholl

27 Gladys Peterson

Cathy Barks

Bill Jensen

28 David Gronert

Anna Cline

Abigale Nelson

29 Kathy Piltingsrud

30 Alysse Adams

April Wedding Anniversaries

April 5 Dick & Nelda Sampel

7 Paul Nelson & Kathy Piltingsrud

10 Eric & Deanna Weber

17 Paul & Janette Grodt

21 The Rev. Mark & Carol Mattes

23 Mark & Ellen Wonderlin

24 Matthew & Andrea Harbaugh

29 Curt & Kathy Johansen

29 Col. Franklin & Bonnie Peterson

Endowment Fund Report

The purpose of the Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church Endowment Fund is to promote faithful Christian stewardship by providing a congregational plan to receive grants, gifts or bequests of money to be used to enhance the total program and mission of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church beyond that supported through regular giving and apart from the general operation of the congregation. The Endowment Fund Committee acts as custodian of the Fund.

The Endowment Committee approved the following distributions of 2011 income:

Awards to Grace Lutheran Church:

- \$1,300.00 for fencing and supplies for the youth vegetable garden
- \$400.00 for support of the youth program to provide sack lunch kits to Hope Ministries
- \$432.14 for Baptismal Bibles
- \$991.76 for Grace Members photo display wall
- \$3,700.00 for first aid kits, defibrillator and CPR training
- \$442.20 for a new fence surrounding the air conditioner units
- \$387.00 for new trash receptacles in the public areas

Other Awards:

- \$500.00 to Lutheran Lakeside Camp for mountain bike repair
- \$2,500.00 to Lutheran Lakeside Camp for floor replacement in lodge
- \$1,000.00 to Msindo/Mararo for school uniforms
- \$1,500.00 to Msindo/Mararo for a motor bike for the local veterinarian
- \$2,500.00 to SE Iowa Synod Mission fund to support of new congregations
- \$1,060.00 to Mosaic for a chair scale for a group home
- \$1,000.00 to Central Iowa Shelter & Services for a food rescue project start up
- \$2,250.00 to Iowa Kidsight for eye screenings for preschool children

A total of \$19,963.10 was awarded. Requests for grants totaled \$47,461.50.

Since inception, the Endowment fund has awarded a total of **\$250,185.90** to **123** projects.

Stewardship Thought –April 2012

Previous "Stewardship Thoughts" have focused on your final act of Stewardship. Does your will ensure that the final distribution of your estate properly reflects your intentions and your theological understanding of good stewardship?

We need to be good stewards of our estate. Accumulated resources should be used not just to benefit those closest to us, but should be used for all the purposes God intended when God entrusted them to us. We should each set aside an appropriate share of our estate for the building up of the Church and serving the needs of others.

Grace Lutheran's Endowment Fund is one of many opportunities to fulfill this mission. The Endowment Committee's report this month reflects the ability to serve the needs of others through the distribution of income from the earnings of this Fund. Contributions to this Fund will increase its ability to serve its mission in the Church, the local community and the worldwide community.

Your Stewardship Committee

College Scholarship Applications

Application forms for scholarships to any Lutheran college, university or seminary are available in the church office. All students who have been a member of Grace Lutheran Church for at least one year may apply. The **deadline of noon on April 24, 2012** is firm so please have all required forms returned to the church office by that time. For additional information or questions, please call the church office.



Plan to Attend
Easter Sunday Pancake
Breakfast
Grace Lutheran Church
Grace Hall
7:00 to 10:00 a.m.

Free will donation
 Sponsored by Men in Mission
 A portion of the proceeds will go
 to Lutheran Lakeside Camp.

New in the Church Library

Cross and Resurrection
God's Wonder and Mystery
 by Klaus Schwarzwallner
 Translated by Ken Sundet Jones
 and Mark C. Mattes

Klaus Schwarzwallner presents a trenchant analysis of the modes of power and production and the dependence on reason and theory that have undergirded society since the Enlightenment and of the implications this has had for the Christian faith.

By request of the Church Council,
a copy of the Grace Policy book is now available in the church library.
 Please feel free to read or take a policy from the notebook. The office will maintain the notebook with updated policies.



Take Me Out to the Ball Game

Can you feel it? Spring is in the air. Men In Mission will be hosting our annual baseball outing on **Sunday June 10th at 1:05 p.m.** Ticket cost is \$7. Mark your calendars. Max Palmer and Carter Woodruff will begin sign-ups soon.



Mark Your Calendars!!

Would you like to be more involved but not sure how? Are there things you wish we were doing here at Grace? Do you have ideas for ministry, fellowship, worship, or a myriad of other aspects of the work of the community of faith known as Grace Lutheran? If you answered "yes" to any of those questions (or even if you didn't) mark May 8 and 10 on your calendars! From 7-9 p.m. on both nights we will have a mass gathering of ideas as we gather in groups to brainstorm on needs and ministry possibilities here at Grace. We will gather in 4-5 groups based on topics and then rotate every half hour to bring as many voices and ideas forward as possible. It is time to see where the Holy Spirit will lead us. We hope to see (and hear you) there!



Photo Wall Photos Easter Sunday

Did you miss out on having your photo taken for this fabulous project? So far we have almost 50 family photos – don't be left out! You can have your photo taken Easter Sunday – just look for the photographer in Grace Hall (where the breakfast is being served). If you have not already seen the slide show of current pictures that Denny Rehder created for the digital frame and the Gathering Hall TV, be on the lookout for it until the photo wall is ready to be displayed in its more permanent form. It's fun to see people in their own elements!

The next photo opportunities will be in late June and September. Of course, you may still send us a scan or email of a favorite photo showing your hobbies at any time! Just drop them off at the church office, and don't forget to include some of your family interests. They will be part of the display as well. Thank you!

DMARC Assembly Report

The Des Moines Area Religious Council's Annual Spring Assembly was held at St. Catherine of Siena Parish and Student Center on March 20, 2012. The program was an interfaith panel discussion with a Jewish Rabbi, a Hindu, and a person from the Jain Community.

The rabbi's presentation centered mainly on what Judaism is not, dispelling some common myths. Hinduism is an ancient religion proclaiming one God in different incarnations. The Jain Community in Iowa is very small; its name means "to conquer." They believe in non-violence, and believe that every organism has a right to live. It originated in India centuries ago. All of the panelists agreed that they wanted a relationship to DMARC to be a part of community; they like the concept of service and want to share in helping others.

During the business meeting President Brendan Comito said DMARC had significant economic problems this past year, forcing cutbacks in food distribution; even so food was given to a thousand children every week and families were helped. He gave thanks for the 30,000 hours of volunteer service and said the fiscal situation is improving.

The Board formulated four goals for DMARC: 1. To end hunger in Des Moines; 2. To expand DMARC's network; 3. To be open to help those in need through other organizations such as Homes of Oakridge and Hospice; 4. To strengthen dialogue of the interfaith community.

The incoming President of the Board of Directors, Susie Paloma, closed the meeting. Future Assembly dates are October 16, 2012 and March 19, 2013.

Joanne Johnson, Delegate

Minutes
Grace Lutheran Church Congregation Council Meeting
February 28, 2012

Present: Rich Snyder, Gary Nehmer, Ardis Schmelzer, Julie Honsey, Kathy Bowermaster, Jay Wangerin, John Roehrick, Carla Peterman, Pastor Schmidt, Mary Helt, Jim Merkwan. Absent: Kristin Medhurst.

Pastor Mike led the council in devotions using "Bread for the Journey."

President Snyder called the meeting to order.

Meeting minutes from January 17, 2012 and February 1, 2012 were approved.

Staff reports were accepted as printed and given verbally.

Financial reports for the general church budget and the daycare budget were accepted as printed.

Rich reminded council members to pay Jackie \$5 each for the Maintenance to Mission book.

Congregational prayer: At the recent council/staff retreat we came up with some ideas for possible themes, and Pastor Mike, Jim Merkwan, Julie Honsey and Jay Wangerin will begin working on this with notes provided by Pastor Mike.

Council members confirmed that they will serve on the following committees:

Social ministry – Julie and Ardis

Education – Kristin is currently on the committee

Youth – Jim

Invitation/Fellowship – John and Kathy

Stewardship – Jay

Worship & Music – Mary

Property – Jay

Finance – Gary

Lay Ministry – Carla and Rich

Personnel - Mary

Rich is accepting suggestions for the staff support committee, which is appointed by the council president and pastor, and for the fourth member of the executive committee.

The Companion Congregation Committee (Karen Taylor, Mary Helt, Diane Hawn, Jane Ridhour) presented a request for approval to undertake a fundraising campaign this spring with the goal of bringing four members of the Msindo/Mararo parish to Iowa in August. The committee provided a handout reviewing the Covenant between Grace and Msindo and a plan for holding several fundraisers, the largest of which would be a silent auction, to raise money for this project.

The Council voted to move to Executive Session at 7:53 p.m. Executive Session was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

It was moved, seconded and passed that the Council approve the Companion Congregation Committee's request to implement their fundraising plan.

As part of the council's ongoing effort to evaluate the staffing requirements for programs and ministry here at Grace, it was moved, seconded and passed that the Council ask a few members of the Property Committee (along with Rich Snyder and a representative from Personnel) to research options and best practices for custodial services, including private contractors and church employees. They are asked to report their findings at the March council meeting.

A motion was made to move all committee meetings to a single night each month. Discussion: This would be a return to the previous way meetings were scheduled. It would give the Pastor and Lay Ministry Director an opportunity to attend more than one meeting if necessary without spending several nights a month at church. The motion was withdrawn and the issue tabled until the March meeting. Council members will bring this idea to their committees and bring feedback to the March council meeting.

Two delegates are needed for the synod convention. Interested persons should talk to Rich or Pastor Mike.

Janet Habick has resigned from the council due to work schedule conflicts. It was moved, seconded and passed that the council would appoint a person to serve for the rest of 2012 and hold elections for someone to serve the third and final year of that term in 2013. Give Rich any names of potential candidates.

Announcements:

Mary Helt will be gone during the month of March.

On March 1, the Music search committee will be interviewing a candidate to direct music ensembles.

Meeting adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Bowermaster
Secretary

Children, youth, and family

GOD AND ME



God and Me Recognition

Fourteen children and families from Grace and other churches are currently enrolled in the *God and Me* classes at Grace and are well on their way to earning their religious emblem badges. The *God and Me* program is the first in the P.R.A.Y. series (*Programs of Religious Activities with Youth*) and is a 5-week program for Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Boy Scouts in grades 1-3. On Sunday, April 15 during the 10:45 worship service we will be recognizing children who have completed the program. Congratulations to Grace members Elizabeth Lewis, Rebecca Lewis, and Kayleigh Medhurst!

First Communion

Two children are enrolled in First Communion classes this year, and we invite you to celebrate this milestone in their lives at the Maundy Thursday service on April 5 at 6:30 p.m. Kindergarten student Brianna Huisman and first grader Mira Voelker have been learning about this sacrament and have decorated their own chalices to be used with their families on Maundy Thursday. The understanding that even very young children can bring with them about Communion is an inspiring thing to witness.



VBS Registration and Volunteer Information Ready!

Get ready to "go deep with God" this summer as we learn about Old and New Testament people of faith! **Registration and volunteer packets** are now available in the Gathering Hall and on Grace's website under the education tab. There are separate forms for preschool (yellow), elementary (green), and volunteers (purple).

A **web link for volunteer sign-ups** is available as well. Go to <http://www.volunteersignup.org/83LCQ> for the preschool week or <http://www.volunteersignup.org/CMQYJ> for the elementary week and follow the easy instructions provided. Volunteers are integral to the success of this ministry of Grace, and opportunities range from being station leaders and helpers to snack assistants and field trip drivers. Check out the web link or pick up a volunteer packet to explore the possibilities of this year's deep sea adventure. Stay tuned also for sign-ups for donating snacks and supplies.

**Week 1: June 11-15 for preschool divers ages 3-5 (potty training required)
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

**Week 2: June 25-29 for divers who completed grades K-5
8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. or 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (aftercare available from 4-5:30 p.m.)**

Questions? See any member of your VBS Planning Team: Beth Flannery, Julie Honsey, Stephanie Johnson, MeLissa Lawson, Kristin Medhurst, Jim Merkwon, Ardis Schmelzer, Michelle Voelker.

See you this summer!





**Garage Sale, Bake Sale,
Plant Sale Pick up,
Annual and Perennial Plant Sale,
Breakfast and Lunch**

Saturday, May 5
8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Grace Hall and the parking lot

The High School youth and families are hosting this sale to raise money for the National Youth Gathering.

You can contribute by coming to the sale or by donating items.

Anyone can donate:

Garage Sale Items: Books, tools, small furniture, toys, clothes, housewares, etc.....**clean and in good condition.** (please, no golf clubs, golf carts, air purifiers or humidifiers, as Goodwill won't accept these.) Please bring donations to Grace Hall II beginning at noon Tuesday, May 1 – 5:00 p.m. Friday, May 4. Questions: Call Linda Gronert 254-0687 (home number) or you can email Chuck Denton at chastam@mchsi.com

Baked Items for Bake Sale: Please bring items to Grace Hall by 8 p.m. on Fri., 5/4 or 7:30 a.m. on Sat., 5/5. Questions: Susanne Carney 255-8073.

Perennial Plants: Perennial donations may be made Saturday morning, between 7 and 8 a.m. Please donate potted plants and provide the following information: Name of plant, sun or shade requirement, and flower color. Questions: Michelle Voelker 279-9283.



April is Public Health Month

Men in Mission

On **April 12**, Jim Merkwan will be presenting on the book "The Next 100 Years: A Forecast for the 21st Century" by George Friedman. The book tries to predict what will happen in the United States and the world in the next 100 years. Please come join us at 6:30 p.m. for supper and the presentation.

Finance Report – February Results

Financial results for February YTD are as follows:

Pledged Offerings – Actual
\$76,135, Budget \$74,865
Other Income – Actual \$2,524,
Budget \$2,974
Expenses – Actual \$79,434,
Budget \$84,077
Net activity – Actual \$(775),
Budget (\$6,238)

Actual net activity was favorable to budget. This was due to offerings above budget due to individuals paying their annual pledge in full. Favorable expense activity is the result of certain expense activity that was budgeted but the actual expense has yet to occur. Additionally, savings was achieved due to lack of the Music Director position for the first two months of the year.

We as Grace members can commit to our own community of health, practicing these tips on improving our emotional, spiritual, and physical selves.

- Eat more fruits and vegetables, consume less sugar and fat, eat healthier snacks, watch portion size.
- Commit to regularly eating together as a family at a table with family discussions where everyone's voice is heard.
- Eat less by avoiding oversized portions, make half of the plate fruits and vegetables, make at least half of the grains whole grains, switch to fat-free or low-fat (1 percent) milk, choose foods with less sodium and drink water instead of sugary drinks.
- Visit one of the numerous farmer's markets as a family. Everyone gets to participate in "What's for Dinner" tonight.
- Make plans to plant a family garden even if it is a container garden.
- Engage in physical activity every day. Aim for a total of 60 minutes for children, 30 minutes for adults.
- Walk to church as a family.
- Consider following the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommendations that children under 2 years old not watch any TV and that those older than 2 watch no more than one to two hours a day of quality programming.
- Plan family trips, picnics to parks, bike paths, nature trails and other outdoor locations.
- Visit the zoo.
- Practice positive parenting and promote violence-free homes.
- Become more involved in your community by becoming a mentor, tutoring youth, committing to your spiritual wellbeing, getting more involved in church activities.



Preventing child abuse and neglect: Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."
Matthew 19:13-15

Truly, the kingdom of heaven belongs to little children. Unfortunately, children across Iowa are suffering from abuse. In 2010, over 12,500 children in Iowa were abused through physical abuse, sexual abuse or through the denial for critical care, such as providing adequate food, shelter or clothing. The abuse of even one child is too many.

Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) works to prevent child abuse and neglect through parent education, intervention and support and helps children of abuse heal and find hope. Through early childhood services LSI helps stop abuse before it starts, and our Bremwood and Beloit Residential Treatment Centers empower children of abuse so that they may resolve their past and look forward to a bright future. The support of our partner congregations allows LSI to maintain these important programs for the children of Iowa. Thank you for being an important partner in our mission of service to all. For more information on ways LSI provides hope to Iowa's most vulnerable populations, visit www.LSIowa.org.

Intervention and education keep family together: A single father of two sons, ages 7 and 5, Rich has been clean and sober for three years. For years, his life was consumed by a string of challenges, but after connecting with a chain of community resources he's put himself on a path of success. "I didn't know what to expect at first," Rich said of FaDSS (Family Development and Self-Sufficiency), the LSI program that helps families achieve goals to become more self-sufficient. "The FaDSS program helped me set goals that were attainable and reachable." Those goals included finding preschool for his youngest son, starting and facilitating a group for fathers, getting out of the child welfare system, applying for jobs and finding child care during his work hours. "I started to see I needed more positive supports in my life," he said. "I started using my dad's group, recovery supports, FaDSS and my church." Obtaining a more secure employment situation was one of his immediate goals. LSI staff encouraged and supported him in his job search, and since last May, Rich has merged personal and professional experience through his job with Parent Partners, a program that matches parents currently involved in the child welfare system with other parents who previously had their children removed and successfully reunited with them. His former LSI FaDSS worker, Judy, helped him see the difference he could make in helping many other families become successful and productive members of society. "I love the work I do," Rich said. "You're helping make a lasting impression, and it's a good feeling when you see people in stores who are doing good and staying sober. Now I cover nine counties, and am well-respected by DHS and the courts."