



The Friendly Visitor

Grace Lutheran Church

December 16, 2014

Sunday Services
8:15 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.
Educational Hour
9:30 a.m.

Contact Us
Pastor Michael Schmidt
revschmidt@live.com

Director of Laity Ministries
Stephanie Johnson
stephaniejohnson@g.com

Director of Music Ministries
Emma Stammer
memmas418@gmail.com

Organist
Jennifer Wohlenhaus Bloomberg
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Grace Kids' Care Director
Heather Nelson
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276-0943

Office Administrator
Jacquelyn Holmes
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Office Assistant
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Custodian
Todd Haugen 1-515-708-3758

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*The staff at Grace Lutheran Church wish you
Peace and Joy this Christmas*

Jennifer Wohlenhaus Bloomberg

Todd Haugen

Jacquelyn S. Holmes

Stephanie Johnson

Heather Nelson

Pastor Michael Schmidt

Emma Stammer

Michelle Voelker

Happy January Birthday

- 1 Betty Hirschauer
Elizabeth Dungan
Theodore Tussing
Bob Gweah
- 2 Penny Hansen
Andrew Allen
Nicholas Jessen
- 3 Conrad Thompson
Jay Wangerin
Eric Weber
Emily Scholten
- 4 Lynn Niemuth
- 6 Julie Honsey
Tammy Denton
Amy Schmler
Paul Calahan
Joseph Mattes
- 7 Laura Ziesman
- 8 Kathy Roat
Catherine Lewis
- 9 Sandy Briggs
- 13 Jaqueline Villela
- 14 Lolita Huth
Tessa Fenimore
- 15 Laria Preston
- 16 Carmen Buell
Kathryn Farrell
Daniel Robbins
- 17 Barbara DeBolt
Kari Berven
McKenzie Carney
- 18 Lonnie Jessen
Stephen Kallenbach
Cooper Bigg
- 19 Arnold Johansen
Rebecca Selander
- 20 Jason Fry
Samuel Speck
- 21 Mary Helt
- 22 Marilyn Allie
Andrea Harbaugh
- 23 Donald Peterson
Alice Kulzer
- 24 Gary Lenhart
- 25 Helen Ballentine
Roy Mann Jr.
Diane Jessen
- 26 Patricia Allen
Julia Beekman
Valerie Culp
Haley Honnold
- 28 Elaine Westvold
Charles Smith
James Kaleewoun
- 29 Norman Trentmann
Cherlyn Lewis
- 30 Nayeli Rodriguez
- 31 Maryena Petty-Lee

Happy January Anniversary

- 4 Elizabeth & Mark Dungan
- 6 Eric & Heather Nelson
- 9 David & JoAnn Gronert
- 30 Larry & Carmen Buell

Thank You's

Carter and Carol Woodruff along with Evelyn Knudsen and our family want to express our deep appreciation for all that the Grace Congregation has done for us on the loss of our brother/son, Paul Knudsen. Your thoughts, prayers, and kind words have meant more than you can know to us. Thank you also to the Congregational Care Committee for the food and paper products. They were appreciated. The Lord is truly walking along beside us during this time through the Holy Spirit as well as the caring community of Grace.

God's Peace,
Carter, Carol, Evelyn and Family

Thank You!
I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all of my Grace family for the thoughts and prayers after my recent surgery. Specifically, a big thank you to the Member Care group for the delicious cavatelli and banana bread. Also thanks to everyone else who brought me food and gifts, visited, called, sent cards, helped me in various ways, and simply cared. You are all wonderful, and I appreciate each and every one of you!

Connie Heuton

2015 Flower Chart

The new flower chart for 2015 is hanging on the brick wall in the Gathering Hall. Cost for 2015 flowers will continue at \$38

2014 Christmas Poinsettias

You will be able to pick up your poinsettia after the Christmas Day worship service on **December 25th**.

If you are delivering poinsettias to our homebound members you may pick up the poinsettias anytime after the Christmas Day worship service. Please deliver them within a week of Christmas Day if possible. Thank you for your ministry.



Big Changes Are A'coming!

We welcome, as our new Director of Communication, **Michelle Voelker**.

Michelle has produced our church bulletins since August of 2011. She will now take on many phases of church communications including the bulletins, newsletter, E-news, website, and Facebook. Michelle will begin her half time position in January 2015. Michelle's hours will be 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Jacquelyn Holmes, Office Administrator, is retiring from full time work, and will begin half time employment in January 2015. Jackie will continue to do the administrative duties for the church which she currently handles. She plans on working Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

We need YOU on Council!

Grace Lutheran Church Council needs new members to replace retiring members, whose terms end in January. You don't need to know all about Grace or have a long history---in fact it is a terrific learning situation and an opportunity to be a part of planning the future.

Grace Council Members and committee members have spent hours poring over information about the neighborhood, church activities, research about successful practices, discussions of what mission would serve our community, and just brainstorming. The background work is done; now, we are ready to plan our steps in mission.

Consider carefully and prayerfully if you are called to be a part of the exciting work of the Council in 2015.

Newsletter and Bulletin Deadlines

Please note that the deadline for both will now fall on Wednesdays. Printing, assembly and mailing will remain unchanged.

The deadline for the January newsletter will be Wednesday January 22nd.

The deadline for each Sunday's bulletin announcement is due the Wednesday prior.

Please send all submissions to Michelle at rvoelker1@mchsi.com You may also leave them in Michelle's mailbox in the office. Submissions sent to graceluth5@msn.com will be forwarded to Michelle.

Winter Jam 2015 Concert

Grace will be sponsoring the High School Youth to go to the Winter Jam concert at Wells Fargo Arena on January 23rd at 6:00pm.

Doors open at 6pm and concert starts at 7:00pm. We will car-pool from the church and will be leaving at 5:30pm.

The church will pay for the High Schooler's ticket and the tickets of up to two guests who are not members of Grace Lutheran....so TELL YOUR FRIENDS! All members of Grace are welcome to attend with us!

The only requirement is that we get an RSVP with the names (first & last name) so that we know how many tickets need to be purchased. This concert usually sells out and ticket sales are at the door only, so we need to be there in plenty of time to get seats.

Two of the many bands playing at this year's concert are Skillet and Building 429 – they put on an INCREDIBLE show! RSVP to Eric Weber – ericjweber6@gmail.com

More details will be put out in January.

Check out the Display Cabinet!



It's a bird, it's a plane, it's..... the Medhurst family train display! Take a moment to stop by the Gathering Hall display cabinet to enjoy their collection of trains. Do you have something that you would like to share? Sign up on the wall by the cabinet and check in with the office when it's time to set up your display. We look forward to seeing your collections.



Super Wednesday Meals End

After December, there will be no more Super Wednesday meals. Thank you to all who have prepared meals this year, and a round of applause to Jane and Ed Ridnour for the coordination of volunteers and the many meals they have provided this fall.

Grace Lutheran Church Council Meeting 11-25-14 at 7:00 PM

Present: Pastor Mike, Mary Helt, Stacie Holst, Jay Wangerin, Eric Weber, Barb Zimany, Kristin Medhurst, Ardis Schmelzer, Sandy Briggs and Karri Brandsfield

Meeting was called to order by Jay.

Devotion & Prayer led by Pastor Mike.

Agenda was accepted as written.

Minutes from the October 28, 2014 council meeting were accepted as written.

Staff reports and financial reports were accepted as written.

- A motion was made and seconded to form a task force to research and put together an emergency response plan here at Grace. The motion carried.
- Emma Stammer is on a leave of absence until the 1st of the year.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Kevin gave us a few revised 2015 budget numbers. Council needs to look at those numbers so we can finalize the budget at the January 6, 2015 council meeting.
- Discussed revisioning with Mike Wagner of White Rabbit Group. The next meeting will be about 1 ½ to 2 hours in length. Pastor will check with Mike to see if December 16th at 7:00 PM will work and let us know.
- Council candidate update. We are still needing to find people to fill the 3 open spots on council. If you are interested or know of anyone, please let one of the council members know.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Worship and Music committee is recommending that starting with Lenten services having a choice of two different services. The 8:15 will be more traditional with just minor changes to make it more guest friendly with a new bulletin layout. The 10:45 service would be a less formal service and would be very similar to the Saturday evening services that used to be held.
 - A motion was made and seconded to proceed with these recommendations from the Worship and Music committee. The motion carried.
- Sandy Briggs would like to put together another pet ministries intergenerational event for the first part of February. She will check with the proper committees to finalize a date.
 - A motion was made and seconded to proceed with this event and to approve it being an annual event here at Grace. The motion carried.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Stewardship: Still working on outstanding pledges.

Property: Still in the process of making a list of projects to be done around Grace and working on getting the lift fixed.

Education: Christmas program planning.

Social Ministry: Star tree is about ready to be put up. Getting more information on the Caring Friends.

Worship & Music: Discussed options on the two services and how to make them each a little different.

Youth Ministry: Working on getting Winter Jam on the calendar. It is on January 23, 2015.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- No announcements.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m. with the Lord's Prayer. The next meeting will be held January 6, 2015 at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Karri Brandsfield, Secretary

2014 Year End Office Deposit

Please make sure any contributions that are mailed or left at the church office for deposit in 2014 are in by **11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, December 30th.**

It's That Time of Year Again

The 2014 Annual reports are due in the church office the first week of January 2015.

Endowment Fund Application Forms Now Available

Application forms for projects to be funded from 2014 Endowment income are available from Jackie in the church office. Projects may be for the benefit of Grace Lutheran Church or for other projects that meet Endowment guidelines.

Deadline for submitting applications is January 31, 2015. Funds for approved projects will be awarded by March 31, 2015.

Finance Report – November Results

Financial results for November YTD are as follows:

- Offerings – Actual \$400,632, Budget \$405,013
- Other Income – Actual \$14,788, Budget \$15,508
- Expenses – Actual \$423,173, Budget \$436,100
- Net activity – Actual (\$7,754), Budget (\$15,579)

Actual net activity was favorable to budget. Pledged offerings are comparable to budget, however unpledged offerings are below budget. Expenses are below budget, large overages in utilities and property maintenance were offset by savings due to lack of the budgeted youth and family position. The youth and family position was budgeted at \$12,000 for the full year (\$10,000 thru November). Removal of this line item from the above analysis would result in overall unfavorable net activity for the year to date results.



National Mentoring Month

January is National Mentoring Month, a time to celebrate mentors and the positive effect they can have on young lives. LSI is blessed to have great volunteer mentors from the community who are investing their time in the children and youth at our Beloit and Bremwood campuses. Thank you to these dedicated individuals! If you are interested in becoming a mentor, visit www.LSIowa.org/volunteer. Or, find a mentoring program in your local area. All it takes is your time, friendship and sharing yourself and your interests to make a difference as a youth mentor!

LSI is proud to be an affiliated social ministry organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Learn more at www.LSIowa.org and www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa.

“Now I feel like I’ll get a lot out of my life.” Chelsea was 15 years old the first time she ran away from home. “I had some troubles where I was living, and I didn’t think it was good for me to live there,” she said.

She slept on a relative’s friend’s couch for two months, ran away again and wound up in court. “They took me to a psychiatric ward because I told them I wanted to commit suicide,” she said quietly. “Then I went to shelter for two months, and then I came to Bremwood.”

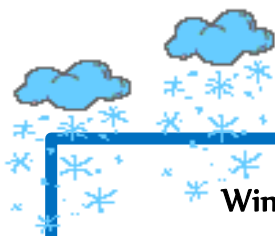
LSI’s Bremwood Residential Treatment Center in Waverly serves youth ages 12 – 18. Many, though not all, of the youth there have experienced trauma from past abuse or neglect. During her time at Bremwood, Chelsea learned new skills to cope with challenges and better ways to identify and communicate her emotions. One of Chelsea’s most meaningful Bremwood experiences was her friendship with her mentor.

“She came once a week, and we got ice cream or would go for walks,” she said. “We went hiking, and we would cook together. I just needed time with someone who wasn’t so involved in my treatment so I could talk to her and see what she thought.”

Chelsea also started to work on coping with family challenges. LSI’s family-focused approach to care encourages families to be involved as much as possible and works with teens who do not have consistent family involvement to find other solutions for permanency and stability in their lives. “I first thought this was a waste of my time,” Chelsea said. “I didn’t want to be here or do what they wanted me to do. When my family came into my treatment and started being involved, I felt better.”

Chelsea recently graduated from Bremwood and is living with family members. Her dream is to graduate high school, attend college and then enter the medical field and eventually become a sonogram technician.

“When I first got here, I didn’t see myself graduating or even turning 18,” she said. “I never thought I’d get anywhere in life, but now I feel like I’ll get a lot out of my life. I want to go to college and know that I have a stable home.”



Winter Weather Policy

If winter weather strikes our area, please take note: when the Des Moines Public Schools dismiss early or are closed, all daytime and evening activities at Grace are cancelled. Please stay home and stay safe.

Have ideas for Sunday morning adult learning?

What's your group or committee up to? Do you foresee a need to share your story with fellow Grace members during the Sunday morning education hour? Do you have plans or ideas for future Sunday morning adult faith enrichment programs, studies, or activities?

If so, please contact Ellen Wonderlin, ellenwonderlin@aol.com, 277-9312, or any other Adult Education Team member – Tom McCleary, Cherie Rissman, or Carol Woodruff. This team will work with you to schedule a date and help arrange room set up and technology needs.

Coming up in January:

Watch future Grace communications for details on upcoming Sunday morning adult learning opportunities. As of this printing, this is the line-up for Sundays starting in January, 9:30-10:30 a.m. in Grace Hall:

- **Jan. 4** – What's the Big Deal about Epiphany?
Pastor Doug Johnson
- **Jan. 11** – Drawn from the Waters: An Exploration of Baptism. Pastor Schmidt
- **Jan. 18** – Congregational budget presentation.
Finance Committee
- **Jan. 25** – TBA

DMARC's Food Pantry Network Most Needed Items

The Food Pantry accepts both food and cash donations. Cash donations allow the food pantry to purchase at wholesale and in bulk, resulting in 2-6 times more food than what retail affords.

There are certain food and non-food items that they most need. Individuals who are struggling to put food on the table may not be able to afford personal items needed to be clean, comfortable, or presentable for work and school. Please consider donating some of the items below:

Infant/baby formula, Diapers/baby wipes
Personal products (shampoo, soap, feminine hygiene, toothpaste, deodorant)
Brown rice, Vegetable soup, Spaghetti sauce
Cereal (instant or regular oatmeal with no sugar added, whole grain cheerios, wheat Chex, Wheaties, granola or shredded wheat)
Shelf stable lowfat UHT Milk – in aseptic packaging
No canned milk
Fresh, whole grain bread items
Fresh fruits and vegetables (sweet potatoes, melons, broccoli, bell peppers, grapes, carrots, oranges)

Please donate before expiration dates and prime ripeness.

Exciting news from the November 13, 2014 ELCA Malaria Campaign Blog

["A new fundraising milestone - \\$13 Million!"](#)

Jessica Nipp Hacker

"I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers." - Ephesians 1:15-16

Dear supporters of the ELCA Malaria Campaign, THANK YOU! Because of your generosity, we have reached a new milestone in giving: the ELCA Malaria Campaign has now raised more than \$13 million!

This puts us well on our way to reaching our goal of \$15 million by the end of 2015. Thanks to the outpouring of gifts, we're even ahead of schedule. The money that you give supports malaria programs implemented by our Lutheran companions and partners in Africa--programs that help communities to reach their goals of increased health, of renewed hope, of wholeness in body and spirit.

Thank you for your love towards all the saints. Each gift to the ELCA Malaria Campaign, no matter the size, contributes to the efforts we are undertaking, together with our Lutheran sisters and brothers in Africa, to help make malaria history.

We give thanks for you!
With deep gratitude,
ELCA Malaria Campaign staff

What's happening with the malaria campaign in Tanzania?

Photo courtesy of LWR and taken from the ELCA Malaria Campaign's blog.



Hidaya Omari farms three acres of land including corn, beans and onions in the Pare Diocese in Tanzania. Because of her community participation and reputation as a good onion farmer, Hidaya was trained as a paraprofessional for the livelihood project with the Lutheran malaria program in Tanzania. With her training, Hidaya teaches 50 onion farmers improved farming techniques and malaria prevention methods.

Through the support of the Lutheran malaria program, Hidaya has increased her own onion quality and yield. In addition, her family has not had any malaria cases since her training with the Lutheran malaria program which is supported by the ELCA Malaria Campaign.

Re-Focusing Update

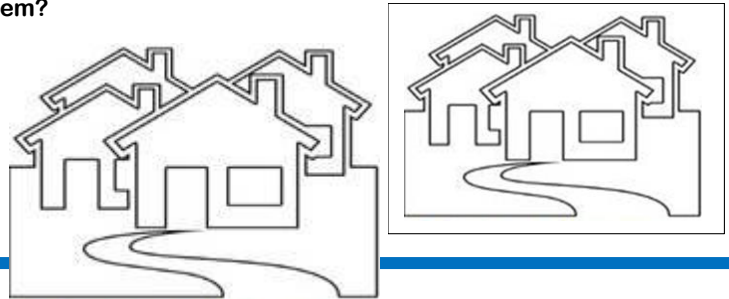
The Re-focusing process with Mike Wagner of the White Rabbit Group has been an eye-opening process of discovery and self-examination. Mr. Wagner has been meeting with the church council and committee chairs through a series of Sunday afternoon meetings. A brief synopsis of each....

First Meeting: "Who are we and how do others experience Grace Lutheran Church?" This part of the process started this spring as the church reviewed its historical past in congregational meetings. Likewise, we examined how the church operated programmatically, financially, and through outreach (communications and marketing). Finally, and most importantly, how do newcomers experience Grace Lutheran Church? From the time newcomers (and potential members) drive into the parking lot and/or walk up to Grace, what do they see, hear, feel, and experience? What these folks remember is our Grace "brand".

Second Meeting: "Who are we called to serve?" This part of the process was particularly eye-opening as we came to the realization that in many of our past and current efforts, we've been focusing on Grace through our pre-conceived notions about the church and religion in general, and what members of Grace desire. Predictably, Grace will eventually fail if we focus strictly on what we want as members...a very strong internal focus. We've all agreed that Grace has been and will be a "community" church. That has always been our strength. However, how do we describe that future member of Grace in our community? To put a "face" on who we are called to serve, we are using the simple phrase "M&M's". This stands for "modern and messy" lives. The lives of our community members (and most likely our members) have become much more complex and "messy" in the past two decades. Worries have increased about child safety, job security as well as economic opportunities. Many folks now worry about raising kids as well as caring for aging parents. Time is at an absolute premium. Kid's activities are now being scheduled on weekends and Sunday mornings that used to be reserved for church and Sunday school. Everyone is subjected to real-time communication regarding both good and bad events and thoughts. We've become a culture where many want something and want it now....instant gratification. And many folks claim to be spiritual but don't want to be part of an organized religion. We live in the "post-Christian" era...a time much different than that even 20 - 30 years ago.

Third Meeting: How do we serve those who God has called us to serve? We are delving deeper into this process and will have our final meeting (at least with Mr. Wagner) on Tuesday night, the 16th. This part of the process is challenging the group to think differently about our processes and programs at Grace. Sunday worship is important and always will be but we should realize that attending church on Sunday mornings may not be a priority for "M&M's". Other church related activities may be more important to them as a member of Grace. Therefore, Sunday worship attendance may no longer be an accurate measure of member involvement at Grace. We need to think deeper about how God calls us to serve "M&M's" throughout the week at Grace. How do and will "M&M's" experience Grace? How has God called us to serve them?

Respectfully submitted by Kevin Drury,
Congregational Council President



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