



The Friendly Visitor

Grace Lutheran Church

March 27, 2015

Sunday Services

8:15 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

Educational Hour 9:30 a.m.

Holy Week Worship schedule

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Madness in March

I really wish that I had started writing this article on the 18th. Many things made more sense then. It was a Wednesday. The weather was beautiful. The soup supper was great. There was time for fellowship and hymns before joining together in the witness of Nicodemus. Then Thursday happened. There was a great influx in NCAA brackets. There was excitement in the air as teams prepared for the first game. That was followed by the joking that "there is plenty of game left" and "first halves are over-rated." Now, the last thing I feel like doing is writing. My brain hurts. My head hurts. My bracket hurts. And a group of courageous young men are headed back to Ames. We were a #3 seed. Ugh.

Now, a few days later, there are no Iowa teams left in the tournament. The Panthers and Hawkeyes made it into the second round, but could not move on to the Sweet Sixteen. It is now time to watch others play and regroup for next year.

The last words from last Wednesday's portrayal keep ringing through my head. As Lathrop Preston brought Nicodemus to life talking about what it is to approach Christ at night, in the secret of the dark, the scene ended with the remark something like "maybe you have come here at night too, uncertain about things. If so, you are in the right place."

There are a lot of things that feel less certain today. It is easy to talk about basketball, and brackets, but it gets trickier to when that uncertainty is talking about other aspects of life. If we are truthful, there are often times when things seem less certain. It may be a major loss, or a change in jobs, a move, or a myriad of other things that happen in life. The truth remains, this is the right place. Finding time to be with God is the right place to be. No matter where you are in life, whether things are feeling secure and making sense, or if you are at a point where you are feeling uncertain, this is the place for you. Grace is the place for you. More importantly, Christ is the place for you.

That sentiment sums up this point in Lent rather well. We are approaching the conclusion of the Spring Cleaning series. We are nearing the end of the portrayals and the MidWeek services. We will trade all of it for the pace and tension of Holy Week, a week when little beyond that slow procession to the cross seems certain. Relax, you are in the right place.

We now find ourselves in that procession that brings Christ to the front. The cross is not the end of this procession. Instead, this procession leads to a marriage that moves beyond the cross into life. It is not a procession that stops there on a hillside, or in a tomb, but marches forward all the way to the ascension. This is a procession that leads to life in Christ.

There will be times of uncertainty along the way. There will be times when you wonder if you are in the right place. There will be times you watch the last few seconds count down and fall one point short of overtime. But no matter what happens, the events of this world do not have the last word. God gets the last word. And that word is love. This is the story of a love, one that could not be contained. Paul writes, "It is better to marry than to burn with passion," and that is exactly what happened. God could not contain God's own love for you, for us, for the world. That is the promise, the promise written in upon your hearts by the Holy Spirit, saying "For God so loved the World that God gave God's only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." This is a love, a passion, that God could not control.

There is madness in March, not one of college basketball, but of God's love. For you. And for all.

Pastor Mike

Happy April Birthday

- 1 Easton Ziska
- 2 Michael Heid
Re. William Kallestad
- 3 Colleen McKinney
Delores Johnson
Ellen Batten
- 4 Darlene Johnson
Kevin Stinn
- 6 Bonna Oldson
- 7 Emily Woodruff
Maya Uehling
Ben Nelson
Bradley Moon
Carolyn Andersen
- 8 Jennie Wonderlin
- 9 Kelley Bowermaster
- 10 Brett Brindley
Matt Hagerty
Lanette Kennebeck
Jared Nelson
Cherie Rissman
Mark Stumme
DeVee Trickle
- 11 Mira Voelker
- 12 Vanessa Bloomberg
Alex Davik
Kyler Medhurst
- 13 Mary McCann
Mark Meyer
Alice Nelson
- 14 Prudence Campbell
- 15 Michael Flannery
Matt Speck
Erin Warren
- 16 Ernest Weatherington
- 17 Alton Calahan
Cynthia Gronert
- 18 Mary Donnenwerth
Justin Fenimore
- 19 Emma Stammer
Kerrie Gutmann
- 20 Kevin French
Jenny Rehder
- 22 Bob Jensen
- 24 Eric Nelson
Charla Preston
- 25 Amy Wonderlin
- 26 Aden Artzer
Mike Carney
Howard Kulzer
Nathan Schöll
- 27 Cathy Barks
Bill Jensen
Gladys Peterson
- 28 Anna Cline
David Gronert
Abbey Nelson
- 29 Kathy Piltingsrud
- 30 Alysse Adams

Happy April Anniversary

- 5 – Dick and Nelda Sempel
- 7– Paul Nelson and Kathy Piltingsrud
- 10 – Eric and Deanna Webber
- 12 – Barry and Sandra Briggs
- 21 – Mark and Carol Mattes
- 23 – Mark and Ellen Wonderlin
- 24 – Matthew and Andrea Harbaugh
- 29 – Curt and Kathy Johansen
Franklin and Bonnie Peterson



Sympathy is extended to

Achmed "Larry" and Joan Johnson for the loss of their grandson Bryan Dale.

Michael and Marilyn Nizzi for the loss of Michael's mother Arla.



Goodbye, we'll miss you!

Grace Kids Care's beloved Sherry's last day in the kitchen was Friday March 23. Sherry is leaving to be the full time caregiver for her daughter and we wish them both the best. You will be missed. Come back to visit us Sherry!

Holy week services and activities

- **Palm Sunday** services 8:15 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.
- **Maundy Thursday** services 11:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.
- **Maundy Thursday Luncheon** Join Martha Circle for a luncheon following the 11:00 a.m. Maundy Thursday service on April 2nd. Please RSVP at the sign-up table before or after both services on Sunday, March 22nd or Sunday, March 29th.
- **Good Friday** services 1:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.
- **Saturday Prayer Vigil**
10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
in the Upper Room.
Open to everyone.
- **Easter Sunday services:**
6:30, 8:15, and 10:45 a.m.
- **Easter Breakfast:**
7:00 – 10:15 a.m.
- **Easter Children's Activities**
9:15 a.m.



Grace receives Hunger Hike recognition

Grace received a hand-thrown pottery bowl as recognition for its contributions to the Des Moines Area Hunger Hike at a banquet March 9 at First Christian Church. Ben Wonderlin accepted the "traveling" bowl on Grace's behalf from a representative of West Des Moines Christian Church. It will reside with Grace until next year.

Grace confirmation youth have participated in the Hunger Hike the last several years. As a result of the 2014 hike, over \$43,000 was given out to help the various anti-hunger efforts of over 25 local and international groups. Many groups will use the funds to provide daily meals or buy hard-to-get dairy, produce and meat items. But one local group plans to start a raised-bed garden; yet another will buy rice and cooking oil – a "touch of home" – for the newest refugee arrivals. Among international efforts, Hunger Hike funds will help get specially prepared and boxed crop seeds to Central America and high protein maize to Ghana.

Over 40 Christian, Jewish, and community groups participated in the hike in 2014. Although each group requesting funds received some monies, about \$25,000 worth of requests remained unfunded.

The Hunger Hike takes place the second week of October each year.



Ben and Ellen Wonderlin as Ben accepts the bowl from Dennis Steel, Hunger Hike Board President, on behalf of Grace Lutheran Church.



The Bowl and Certificate will be displayed in the Gathering Hall DisplayCase for the next year.

Save the Dates!

April 5

Plan to Attend

Easter Sunday Pancake Breakfast

Grace Lutheran Church

Grace Hall

7:00 to 10:00 AM



Free Will donation

Sponsored by The Men in Mission

A portion of the proceeds will go to Lutheran Lakeside Camp

May 3: Grace Fellowship Dinner, 5:00 p.m.

May 7: Men in Mission 6:00 p.m.

June 28: Men in Mission Ball Game!
1:08 p.m. Tickets will be \$7 each.

June 7: New Member Class 1:00 p.m.

New Men's Group

Are you a man who is looking for a group of Christian men to do projects and just hang out with now and then? Do you have half a Saturday each month that you could get together and either share your skills or learn from others?

If this sounds like something you would be interested in, call or text Aaron or Eric at [515-681-6239](tel:515-681-6239) or [515-210-6960](tel:515-210-6960). Thanks and God Bless!

Grace Lutheran Church Council Retreat Meeting

3-1-15

Present: Stacie Holst, Pastor Mike Schmidt, Jay Wangerin, Don Peterson, Sandy Briggs, Barb Zimany, Kevin Drury, Eric Weber, Brad Lint and Karri Brandsfield

Discussed potential uses of the \$700,000 bequest from Marvin Malmin.

- A motion was made and seconded to give a single gift of \$70,000 to the Synod Benevolence. The motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to pay-off all the outside debt at First American Bank. The motion carried.

What we need from here?

- 1.) Property committee list – parking Lot
- 2.) M & M first impression/experience
- 3.) M & M marketing plan
- 4.) Ideal staffing needs/situation
- 5.) Inventory/assessment of current ministries at Grace
- 6.) Youth programming

Discuss how to make council more appealing to M & M's

Discuss how to get D.E.E.P. process implemented within committees

Committee assignments – stay the same for right now

March council meeting be as regularly scheduled for March 24, 2015 @ 7:00 p.m.

Concluded the meeting @ 3:00 p.m. with the Lord's Prayer

Respectfully Submitted,
Karri Brandsfield, Secretary

Finance Report – February Results

Financial results for February YTD are as follows:

- Pledged Offerings – Actual \$69,045, Budget \$73,083
- Other Income – Actual \$2,342, Budget \$3,625
- Expenses – Actual \$79,319, Budget \$84,612
- Net activity – Actual (\$7,932), Budget (\$7,903)

Actual net activity was comparable to budget due to offsetting variances. Offerings were below budget as one service was cancelled. Expense activity was below budget. Overages in maintenance (Elevator repairs) were offset by savings from the vacant Youth and Family position.

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 2014 income:

Awards to Grace Lutheran Church:

- \$700 to remove Ginko tree on property
- \$4,363 for carpet replacement
- \$770 for establishment of Member Care Group for outreach to those in need
- \$3,447 for refurbishment of the handbells

Other Awards:

- \$2,500 to Lutheran Services in Iowa for a community garden (Global Greens) project
- \$500 to the Coalition in Support of Hungry Children for their After School Arts Program of Meal-in-a-Bag Kit

A total of \$12,280 was awarded. Requests for grants totaled \$26,342.

Since inception, the Endowment fund has awarded a total of **\$275,389** to **144** projects.



Vacation Bible School News!

Don't forget about registering for Vacation Bible School! Spaces in Grace's elementary week are being held until March 31. After that date, we will need your registration packet in order to guarantee your child's space. Mark your calendars and join the fun! Please note that most program options are free of cost, but if you are enrolling in the full day program of June 22-26, there is a \$25 fee. Scholarships are available by request.

The theme this year is "On the trail with Jesus." Each day we will travel to a different location where Jesus did ministry and learn about how he transforms lives. Can you guess the stories by the settings? They take place at a well, a hill, a house with a flat roof, a tree, and a lake. Hint: The story on the hill has to do with feeding hungry people, and it shares a similar item with the story on the lake – and plenty of them!

Below is a reminder of the dates as well as other important information. More detailed information about the weeks is available at www.gracedm.org under the youth tab. Flyers and registration forms for children and volunteers are in the Gathering Hall. Can't volunteer on site that week but want to help? Look for the snack donation lists in the Gathering Hall soon. Questions about the program or volunteering? Contact Stephanie Johnson in the church office.

See you this summer!

June 8-12 (Mon-Fri): Ages 3-5 (potty trained) at Grace
9:00am-12:00 p.m.

June 15-18 (Mon-Thurs): Grades K-5 (completed) at St. Andrew's Episcopal (5720 Urbandale Ave.)
6:00-8:30 p.m.

June 22-26 (Mon-Fri): Grades K-5 (completed) at Grace
8:30am-12:00 p.m. or 8:30am-4:00 p.m. with after care option from 4:00-5:30 p.m.
Cost for full day program: \$25/child for the week

Please note that due to limited space available, children may register for one elementary week only.

Volunteers:

We love our volunteers at VBS! These programs are only possible because of you. There are a variety of ways to help – welcome and registration assistants, preschool teachers, small group guides, station leaders, afternoon helpers, Family Night helpers, and more! Check out the pink volunteer forms in the Gathering Hall, or go to <https://www.volunteersignup.org/BFWQA> for the June 8-12 preschool week, or <https://www.volunteersignup.org/RAFCM> for the June 22-26 elementary week at Grace.

Volunteer dates to note:

Required training for: Week of June 8: May 26, 6-8 p.m. at Grace
Week of June 15: June 3, 6-7 p.m. at St. Andrew's
Week of June 22: May 27, 6-8 p.m. at Grace

Meet and greet pizza night for Lutheran Lakeside staff: Sunday, June 21, 6 p.m.

This will be an important night for getting to know each other before we start working together the next day. We highly encourage all volunteers for the week of June 22 to attend.

Housing needed for Lutheran Lakeside staff

We are in need of housing for three Lakeside staff who will be helping with the week of June 22. We are hoping to be able to house all 3 of them with the same family since they will be arriving in one car. They will be arriving on the evening of Sunday, June 21, and we are planning a pizza gathering for them and the volunteers at 6pm that night at Grace. The host family is of course invited as well. After that, they will travel to their host home. The camp's expectation of the host family is to provide daily breakfast and dinner, and of course showers. Lunch will be provided by us at VBS, and no dinner will be needed on Thursday evening, June 25 because of Family Night. They will return home after VBS on Friday night, June 26. Respect for the staff's need for rest by their host is requested.

If you are interested in being a host family – especially if you can house all 3 guests – please contact Stephanie Johnson. We greatly appreciate it.

LWR Spring Drive: March 15-29

Help eliminate world hunger through a donation to Lutheran World Relief. Bring donations to worship and place them in the offering plate, or give a donation to a committee member at the display in the Gathering Hall. Please write checks out to Grace Lutheran Church and put LWR on the memo line.

Check out the display in the Gathering Hall. A map shows where our donations of kits and quilts went last year. For more information about LWR, visit www.lwr.org



April 2015, LSI Bulletin/Newsletter Article and Story

April is Month of the Young Child & Child Abuse Prevention Month

In 2014, LSI's early childhood programs made more than 14,900 home visits to Iowa families with infants, toddlers and preschoolers. These programs help parents learn about child development, parenting strategies and community resources, and they can also help reduce some of the risk factors that may lead to child abuse or neglect, such as critical stress. LSI often partners with parents who grew up in unstable home environments and desire to give their own children a different quality of life. Your support helps our youngest Iowans grow up healthy and safe!

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.

A New Parenting Path

When Kalee became a young mom in high school, she knew exactly what kind of parent she *didn't* want to be.

"My childhood was very different," she said. "There was a lot of miscommunication on all levels and yelling all the time. I had a lot of trouble growing up, and I didn't want my kids to go through that."

Instead, Kalee and her partner Shane are finding their own parenting style, thanks to some support from LSI's Families Together program. Families Together is a voluntary home visitation program that offers families parenting education, community resources, support and more.

"Kalee and Shane are so much fun to work with," said Gaylene, an LSI caseworker. "They are very good parents. They just needed a little more confidence in their skills."

For example, the family learned new communication tips to use with their son Gabe, age 4.

"Before we started the program, Shane and I fought a lot about different parenting styles," Kalee said. "We would get frustrated when we couldn't get Gabe to understand what we wanted him to do. We learned how to talk to him better, and now we're on the same page."

Through Families Together, LSI can partner with families at any time from before their child is born up to age 18. On average, an LSI caseworker will meet with a family for 10 – 12 months. That approach, which builds trust and relationships, is comforting, Kalee said.

"Gaylene feels like a part of our family," Kalee said. "Gabe always asks when she's coming. Having her here also helped prepare Gabe for school."

Kalee hopes her two children will grow up happier than she was, she said.

"I don't think it will be as much of a struggle for them to succeed," she said. "They will feel more secure and loved than I felt growing up."



ELCA Malaria Campaign
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

In recognition of World Malaria Day on April 26, 2015, we celebrate the ongoing work of the ELCA Malaria Campaign. The campaign works with companion churches and Lutheran partners in 13 African countries by providing malaria education, prevention and treatment. The exciting news is that 90% of the \$15 million fundraising goal has already been reached! The fundraising will officially end on January 31, 2016, after which global Lutheran partners who choose to prioritize malaria programming will seek funding through ELCA World Hunger, which has a long history of supporting health-related programs. Here's what's been happening in some of the African countries. More information is in the spring newsletter on the social ministry bulletin board outside the office.

- Tanzania – Nearly 2 million people have learned how to protect themselves and their families from malaria through education and awareness messaging.*
- Burundi – The malaria program is building off of community leadership already established by an existing empowerment program, supported by gifts from ELCA World Hunger.*
- Zambia – Pastors within the Lutheran church have been trained in malaria education and prevention.*
- Malawi – More than 3000 people have participated in savings and loan associations, creating long-term income stability for families and communities.*
- Liberia – Ebola awareness is integrated with malaria programming.*

Brochures and donation envelopes are available in the Gathering Hall. Please continue to keep the ELCA Malaria Campaign and others like it in your prayers.

NYG meeting Palm Sunday!

The next preparation meeting for Detroit will be Palm Sunday from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. in the Youth Room.

Kari Dostalick is providing our dinner/snacks (details to come).

Bring your sketched ideas for t-shirts and trade items as we'll need to make final decisions soon. We'll also discuss hotel room assignments as we need to submit those around Easter. The ELCA is also providing some backpack options so we'll discuss those too!



**112 days
until Detroit!**



Grace Youth Annual Garage, Bake & Plant Sale

Saturday, May 2nd • 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Grace Lutheran Church • Grace Hall

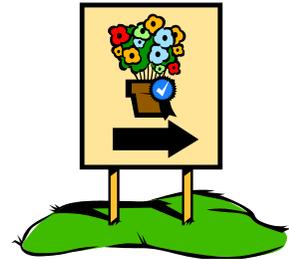


Garage Sale

Donate your gently used clothing, housewares, furniture, books, games, toys, electronics, CDs/DVDs, holiday decorations and more! (Please make sure electronics are in working condition and that clothing isn't stained.) Items may be dropped off in Grace Hall starting Tuesday, April 28 (noon) through Friday, May 1 at 6:00 p.m.

Plant Sale

Plant orders may be picked up outside the church from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.



Bake Sale

Attention all bakers! We are looking for baked goods – breads, cupcakes, cookies, bars, muffins and more – to sell during the garage sale. Please wrap items in Saran wrap and place 4 - 5 to a plate. Bring goodies to the church kitchen on Friday, May 1 or by 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 2. Sign-up to donate baked goods at volunteer central.

Volunteer to Help!

We are looking for individuals/families to sort through donations and to help set up the garage sale during the afternoons/evenings on Tuesday, April 28 through Friday, May 1. In addition, we could use some extra hands throughout the garage sale on May 2. We also need 10 individuals to help unload plants and sort the orders from 6:45 to 8:00 a.m. on May 2.

Interested in volunteering? E-mail Kari Dostalík at kdostalík@msn.com or call 252-1892.

*All proceeds benefit the Grace Youth Fund
and the high school trip to the 2015 National Youth Gathering.*

The Friendly Visitor

Grace Lutheran Church



Grace Garden

Our next meeting will be Wednesday, April 15 at 5:30. We'll be adjusting our planting map, scheduling work days, and possibly even planting potatoes! The donated rototiller is fixed and in the shed. Jay and a few other members are itching to get into the garden, so you may see the ground tilled and ready for snap peas and potatoes soon!

If you like vegetables, playing in the soil, or just want to know what we are up to, we'd love to have you join us!

Hunger Appeal update!

As of last weekend, the number of meals provided by the donations from Grace members totals 3,167 which of course is far above the initial goal of 2015 meals that we set at the beginning of the food drive. Way to go Grace. This does not mean that all of the money goes to the Des Moines Food Pantry. While we are counting all money donated to hunger appeals as though they were donated to the Food Pantry, money earmarked for World Hunger, ELCA, and other appeals will be forwarded to those organizations. But if the funds had been given to the Des Moines Food Pantry, then the number of meals would be 3,167.

15 and counting... That's how many slow cooker donations we have received so far! Thank you for your generosity. Past recipient families have been very grateful. The drive continues through the end of March if you would still like to participate in this aspect of our hunger campaign. Many thanks!



Hunger Facts!

We have read how difficult it is for the food insecure to manage on a meager budget while trying to make the right choices for their families. Now you have the chance to act! The House and Senate are expected to take up their respective FY2016 Budget Resolutions this week.

The House budget resolution was approved Thursday, March 19, along a party line vote of 22-13. The bill will be on the floor for a vote by the full House during the week of March 23. During this time, Members will vote on amendments to the Bill. ***The House budget converts SNAP to a block grant, and assumes cuts of \$125 billion over 10 years.***

The Senate Budget Committee will debate its budget resolution on Thursday, March 19, and consider amendments in Committee. Consideration by the full Senate will occur next week at the same time as the House floor action. Votes are expected in both chambers mid-week. The proposal recommends massive potential cuts that are broad and ambiguous, but ***could result in more than \$1 trillion in cuts to social safety net and welfare programs, including SNAP, school lunch and other child nutrition programs***, Supplemental Security Income for the elderly and disabled poor, the Earned Income Tax Credit, among other programs.

Polk County and the Des Moines Area Religious Council have partnered to open the **Polk County River Place Food Pantry** located at **2309 Euclid Avenue**. Once per calendar month, individuals and families in Polk County can go to the food pantry to receive a four-day supply of healthy, nutritional food and other non-essential non-food items. In an effort to better serve the needs of the population residing in the immediate and surrounding areas of the food pantry, specialty ethnic foods have been identified and will be available. Food is distributed solely to those in need without income being a consideration. Food pantry hours are **Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.**