

February 2017

Moving from vision to action *for the sake of Grace and for the sake of this world*

by Pastor Dave Lyle

Most of us aren't very familiar with the Book of Proverbs. It's not the book of the Bible in which we spend the most time. If you can recall anything at all from this ancient collection of wisdom sayings, it may well be this: "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (29:18 KJV). This is wisdom that is both simple and true. Said another way, if you don't know where you're going, how can you possibly hope to get there?

More than a year ago, the leadership of Grace discerned a new vision for this time, namely that we will be *Together in Christ: To love, to grow, to serve*. It's a good vision, and it has been influential in my own thinking about our future. If I could be so bold as to propose an amendment to the proverb above, it would be this: "Without action, the vision fades away." Vision is an important driver in our ministry, but without implementation, the vision remains little more than a nice set of propositions left to gather dust on the shelf.

As we enter 2017, we move toward deeper implementation of this vision for Grace. As we seek to better love, grow, and serve one another and this world in Jesus' name, the following questions present themselves:

How do we better know and love one another through Jesus Christ?

How do we better know and love God through Jesus Christ?

How do we better know and love the world for the sake of Jesus Christ?

The first question addresses the "to love" aspect of our vision. This year we will be reforming the Fellowship Committee. The goal is emphatically not to create a "kitchen and potluck



committee," but rather to begin exploring how to better enable people to develop meaningful, mutual relationships at Grace for the sake of sustaining one another in our lives as people of God.

The second question, about knowing and loving God, addresses the vision "to grow." This is a matter of faith formation that goes beyond our wonderful educational offerings and points us toward a life of discipleship marked by the cross. The task is to create an overarching goal of lifelong learning for our members, from the youngest to the most seasoned.

The final question points us toward the "to serve" element in our vision. We have wonderful social and benevolence ministries, but not a great deal of cohesion or congregational ownership. The vision points us to enact a strong congregational sense of mission to the world through the work of our own hearts and hands.

Continued on page 2

I hope and trust that God will empower the people of Grace to move from vision to concrete implementation, for the sake of Grace and for the sake of this world. There is no doubt that the world needs the fellowship, discipleship, and service of God's people.

For many this seems especially true right now, as a concrete example of the need for the witness of God's people presents itself in the recent executive orders regarding immigration and refugees. It should be noted that this is not about being "political." It is not about the church aligning itself with or against a particular party or politician. It is, however, very much about loving, growing, and serving others in Jesus' name. Both the Old and New Testaments are straightforward on this issue.

In Leviticus, the command is clear:

The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.
(Leviticus 19:34).

Our Lord Jesus is equally clear:

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.
(Luke 10:27).

My prayer for Grace in these days is that we will continue to work with partners such as RefugeeOne in the important work of welcoming the stranger, especially those who are fleeing danger and hoping for a better life. This, after all, is the work of loving, growing, and serving the world for the sake of the gospel.

If you have interest in participating in any of these conversations about putting our vision into action, please let me know.

Pastor Dave Lyle

Annual Leadership Retreat

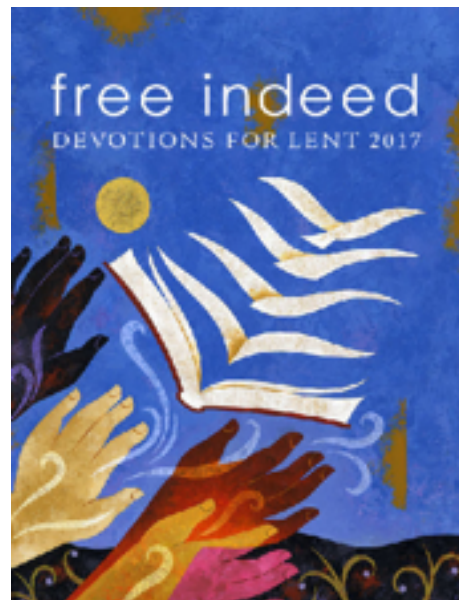
Members of Grace Church's many boards and committees are invited and encouraged to attend the annual leadership retreat on Saturday, February 25, from 8:30 – 11:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. It's an opportunity to collaborate on plans for ministry in the coming year. Continental breakfast will be available.

Free Indeed: Devotions for Lent 2017

The devotional "Free Indeed" takes you through Lent with daily readings from Martin Luther's Small Catechism, inviting you to reflect on the basics of Christian faith, within the observance of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

Each reading is accompanied by a color photo, a quote to ponder, reflection, and prayer. Pick up a free copy of this beautiful, full-color book at Grace on Sundays in February.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 1.



Grace Notes is published monthly by Grace Lutheran Church and School, 7300 Division St., River Forest, Ill. It is mailed to Grace members, parents of students at Grace School, and friends of the congregation. The newsletter is online at www.graceriverforest.org. This issue was mailed via U.S. Postal Service Bulk Mail on Friday, February 3, with the hope that it will arrive in your mailbox no later than February 10. Copies are also available at Grace.

Deadlines and submissions. The February issue of Grace Notes will be mailed on Friday, March 3. The deadline for copy is Wednesday, February 22; the issue covers events through early April. Please send news to ggotsch@graceriverforest.org. Please limit your submissions to news relating to Grace Lutheran Church and School, its mission, ministries, and the benevolences the congregation supports. Articles should be no longer than 500 words. Submissions may be edited for length, clarity, and relevance.

Learn about many ways to serve others at the annual Benevolence Fair

Grace Church currently designates a tithe (10 percent) of members' annual contributions to support 34 partner ministries beyond our doors. The Benevolence Committee invites you to learn more about these ministries at the Benevolence Fair on Sunday morning, March 5, at 9:45 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. Representatives from many of these organizations will be available to talk with you about their mission and ministry. There will be colorful displays, booklets, pamphlets, and, of course, coffee. The 2017 revision of the Benevolence Handbook will also be available at the fair.

Grace's Benevolence Committee is made up of six elected congregation members: Susan Allen and Carolyn Becker, co-chairs, Stewart Clarke, Lois Harb, David Kluge, and Julie

Lehmann, with Pastor Dave Wegner serving on the committee *ex officio*. The committee also administers gifts from the Kingdom Frontiers fund, an endowment established many years ago in memory of Otto Geiseman, pastor at Grace from 1922 to 1962. In the fall of 2016 Kingdom Frontiers contributed \$2,000 to support ELCA ministries in South Sudan.

In addition to sending checks to these organizations, we pray for their work on Sunday mornings during our worship services. Grace members support many of these organizations with gifts of time and talent as well as money. Come to the Benevolence Fair and discover how you can become more involved with many local organizations.

A few of the organizations Grace members support with time, talent and treasure

Kidz Express serves at-risk, hard-to-reach children and their families who live at or below the poverty level on Chicago's west side. Kidz Express offers an after-school program for children from September to June and a summer program. Volunteers are needed for tutoring on Tuesday evenings. Contact Mary Paulson (sherwinhol1@comcast.net) for more information.

Harmony Community Church of Chicago's Food Bank serves 400 families every Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Grace volunteers work alongside volunteers from Harmony. Contact Diane Carioscio (Diane_Carioscio@comcast.net) for more information.

Hope for Grieving Children — Africa trains pastors, community leaders and orphan caregivers with the knowledge and skills needed to address the grief and suffering of the many children in Zambia and other African nations traumatized by parental loss due to AIDS and other problems. Grace member Tony Stephens leads fund-raising efforts for the organization.

Housing Forward (formerly PADS) serves clients in west Cook County with a comprehensive "housing + services" solution for transitioning individuals and families out of homelessness. Grace members pack lunches each month for the guests at two overnight emergency shelters. Housing Forward has volunteer opportunities for the whole family. Visit housingforward.org for information.

RefugeeOne is a refugee resettlement agency that provides a full range of services to refugees resettled in the Chicago area. It assists refugees in becoming independent, self-supporting members of their new community. Grace School students recently contributed Welcome Kits to RefugeeOne. Grace Church has sponsored specific refugee families in the past. Visit refugeeone.org for more information.

The nuns of **Fraternité Notre Dame** provide social services on Chicago's west side. Grace members gather in the Fraternité kitchen monthly to make sandwiches for the nuns to distribute to people who are homeless. (See p. 10 for more information.)

ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Appeal relies on the local expertise and ingenuity of companion churches and partners, supporting them as they identify and tailor solutions to their communities. Donate at elca.org/hunger.

Thank-you from The Night Ministry

"On behalf of everyone at The Night Ministry, and especially the people we serve, I would like to thank you and Grace Lutheran Church and School for your generous in-kind gift of holiday stockings, hygiene items and socks. Your generosity ensures that we can respond to the critical needs of youth and adults facing homelessness."

Paul W. Hamann, President and CEO

The Night Ministry serves members of the Chicago community who are struggling with poverty or homelessness.



ADULT EDUCATION

Come to Adult Education sessions at 9:45 a.m. on Sunday mornings for thought-provoking presentations and discussions that build faith and fellowship. Look for more information about classes and locations on the signs in the atrium.

If you have ideas or suggestions for Adult Ed programming, please contact Ted Anton, chair of the Adult Education Committee (tanton@depaul.edu).

February 5, 12 and 19

Why History and Historical Thinking Are Vital to Christian Discipleship

Pauline Viviano, Associate Professor Emerita, Theology, Loyola University

What does the Bible have to say about women to women?

Feminist interpretation of the Bible has broadened over the years to include Latin American, African, and Asian women, who have brought the distinctive insight of their post-colonial cultures to biblical interpretation. This series includes three classes:

February 5: "It's All Interpretation." Where we have come from in the interpretation of the Bible and why it matters that we are here now.

February 12: "Why Do the Women of the Bible Always Get Blamed?" A look at the history of the treatment of women in the interpretation of the Bible

February 19: "It's All about Liberation." The voices of Third World women in interpreting the Bible.

Sunday Bible Study

Led by Bob Jandeska in the conference room, the Bible study group meets every Sunday morning at 9:45 a.m. in the Conference Room on the lower level.

February 12

Do Low-Income Students Have Equal Access to Effective Teachers?

Eric Isenberg, Senior Researcher, Mathematica Policy Research

A recent federal study surprisingly shows that, despite a large student achievement gap, low-income students have teachers who are as effective as those of high-income students. This talk is given by the study's principal investigator (a Grace member) on the economic issues in American public education and what can be done to address them.

February 26, March 12

Jesus and the Renewal of Community Life

Ray Pickett, Professor, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

This two-part series focuses on Jesus' Galilean ministry in its turbulent political context. The Gospels describe Jesus leading a prophetic renewal movement responding to adverse social and economic effects of Herod Antipas' project of urbanization. In contrast to individualistic interpretations of Jesus' ministry, we will explore how Jesus is restoring community life from the margins.

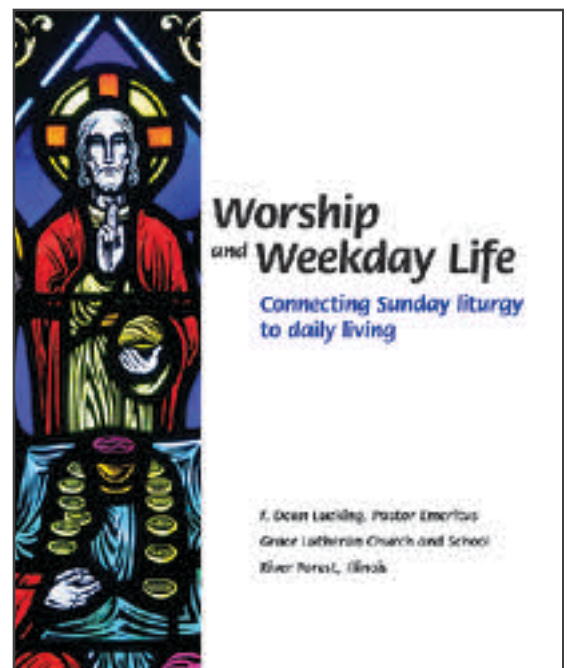
"Worship and Weekday Life"

Connecting Sunday liturgy to daily living

Grace's Pastor Emeritus, Dean Lueking, wrote about the different parts of our communion liturgy for Sunday worship folders in 2016. His comments have been collected into a booklet. Copies are available at the reception desk at Grace.

Pastor Lueking sums up the purpose of the booklet in a brief introduction:

Here are notes on the liturgy meant to help us better understand why we do what we do when we do it. ... Each comment will be brief, jargon-free, and bent toward connecting Sunday worship with weekday life in the world around us.



WORSHIP

SUNDAY MORNINGS

Communion at 8:30 and 11 a.m.

February 5

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Isaiah 58:1-12, Psalm 112:1-10, 1 Corinthians 2:1-1-16, Matthew 5:13-20

February 12

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Deuteronomy 30:15-20, Psalm 119:1-8, 1 Corinthians 3:1-9, Matthew 5:21-37

February 19

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18, Psalm 119:33-40, 1 Corinth. 3:10-11, 16-23, Matt. 5:38-48

February 26

TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD

Exodus 24:12-18, Psalm 2, 2 Peter 1:16-21, Matthew 17:1-9

ASH WEDNESDAY

March 1

Holy Communion, 7 p.m.

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17, Psalm 51:1-17, 2 Corinth. 5:20b--6:10, Matt. 6:1-6, 16-21

March 5

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7; Psalm 32, Romans 5:12-19, Matthew 4:1-11

BACH CANTATA VESPERS

FEBRUARY 29, 3:45 P.M.

Herr Jesus Christ, wahr' Mensch und Gott

Lord Jesus Christ, true man and God, BWV 127

Jan Rippentrop, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, homilist

Telemann: Concerto for Recorder in C Major, TWV 51:C1

Lisette Kielson, Bloomington, Illinois, recordist

February 19 cantata looks ahead to Lenten themes

Herr Jesus Christ, wahr' Mensch und Gott (Lord Jesus Christ, true man and God, BWV 127) was composed for the last Sunday before Lent in 1725. It is based on an eight-stanza funeral chorale; Bach's music anticipates the Lenten season and the retelling of the Passion story on Good Friday. The orchestra includes two recorders as well as two oboes and a trumpet, which rings out to depict the final judgment.

The prelude to the service is a Telemann concerto for recorder, played by guest Lisette Kielson. Jan Rippentrop, Carlson Professor of Homiletics at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, is the homilist.

The pre-service music begins at 3:45 p.m. on Sunday, February 19, at Grace, with a preview lecture at 3 p.m. by Mark Peters of Trinity Christian College in the Seminar Room.

Bach organ recital

Hear all of Bach's Leipzig organ chorales played in one concert by four Chicago-area organists, including Michael D. Costello, on Friday, February 10, 7:30 p.m., at St. Chrysostom's Church, 1424 N. Dearborn in Chicago. There will be a freewill offering at the concert.

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH ST. JOHN PASSION

April 8, 7 p.m. and April 9, 4 p.m.

Bach Cantata Vespers Chorus and Orchestra
in collaboration with Chicago Choral Artists

Michael D. Costello, director
Hoss Brock, tenor (Evangelist)
Keven Keys, baritone (Jesus)

Susan Nelson, soprano
Karen Brunssen, mezzo-soprano
Patrick Muehleise, tenor
Douglas Anderson, baritone

Performed without intermission

Free admission ■ \$25 Suggested Donation ■ Childcare available

Lenten conversations about racism

Grace's Faith Perspectives Committee is organizing book discussion groups or a Lenten-season conversation about racism. Group meetings begin in a few weeks. Here's more information.



Why this? Why now?

"We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another," says the Apostle Paul in Romans 12:5. Racism is brokenness within the body. The Lenten journey of repentance

provides an appropriate framework for learning about the persistence of racism in America.

Where did this idea come from?

Members of the Faith Perspectives Team spoke with pastors and members of other churches who have opened similar conversations in their own congregations; they also met with representatives of the ELCA Metro Chicago Synod's Antiracism Task Force. The ELCA representatives suggested that the congregation center their conversation through a shared book discussion. Pastor Dave Lyle and Pastor Dave Wegner proposed that the conversation at Grace take the form of small discussion groups that meet throughout the season of Lent.

I don't know if I am comfortable with this. The church shouldn't be discussing this.

While the effects of racism may not be blatantly obvious in our own lives they are most certainly obvious in the lives of those who live mere miles from our own homes and church. But what might be even more daunting is the realization that a conversation on racism may challenge us to confront our own complacency, our passivity, and our acceptance of it. Holding these conversations within the context of our church community gives us the freedom and safety of acceptance, forgiveness, grace, love, and hope.



"*Waking Up White* is a wake-up call for white people who want to consciously contribute to racial justice rather than unconsciously perpetuate patterns of racism. With honesty and humility, Debbie Irving shares her own story of transformation—a journey of opening herself to learning about the realities of racism and the unintended impacts of white privilege. By confronting her own fears and mistakes, she gleans many useful lessons and tips that can help move others from confusion and avoidance to constructive engagement, authentic connection and courageous action." — Terry Keleher, Thought Leadership and Practice Specialist, Race Forward

How will the small groups work?

Groups will be comprised of 8-10 people and will meet five times for about 90 minutes for discussion. Participants will read sections of the text in preparation for discussion each week.

What will we be reading?

After considering several titles the Faith Perspective Team has chosen "*Waking Up White*, and *Finding Myself in the Story of Race*," by Debby Irving. Irving is frank and unwavering in her writing while carefully choosing her words and reminding readers that she does not speak for anyone but herself. She writes:

You may find my degree of candor jarring. Please know that at the heart of this work is speaking the unspeakable. A general understanding in the world of racial healing holds that beliefs gather steam and hurt most when they are left to fester unidentified and unacknowledged in people's hearts and minds.

Again, the Lenten journey provides an important and helpful framework. The conversations in which those festering things are brought forward, named, and examined are surrounded by the promise of God's mercy and grace through the cross.

Debby Irving is a white person. Shouldn't we hear from someone of color?

This is just the first voice in our conversation. Following this initial study the Antiracism Task Force recommends adding additional resources and insights from authors of other races and experiences.

How do I sign up?

Faith Perspectives Team members will be in the Atrium on February 12, 19 and 26, helping participants choose a group that fits their schedule and passing out copies of the book.

What are the costs?

We have purchased 50 copies of the book through a Legacy of Grace grant request. After the 50 are claimed during signups, additional copies may be purchased through the church for \$15.22, or you may purchase one elsewhere.

May I invite someone else, a non-Grace member perhaps?

Of course. If you know someone who would like to participate in one of the small groups, have them choose a group that meets on a day and time suitable for their schedule. Be sure their name gets added to the sign-up list so the group facilitators can expect them.

I can't make every group meeting.

By posting the days and times each group will meet we hope you will be able to choose a group with a schedule that works for you throughout the study. If you have to miss a meeting of your own group, you might wish to "visit" another group for the week with advanced notice to that group's facilitator.

I want to be a group facilitator.

Thank you! Please contact one of the Faith Perspectives Team members at the end of this document to let us know of your interest. We will ask you to do a few things right away:

- Pick a day of the week, time, and location for your group's meeting.
- Commit to being present for each group meeting.
- Come to the Facilitator Training Session following 11 a.m. worship on February 19, 2017. Lunch will be provided. In that meeting we will focus on group management skills and hand out reading schedules and discussion questions.

As a facilitator, your role is not to be the expert. You are charged with convening the group, helping all group members participate to their comfort level, and ensuring all reflections are welcomed and heard.

What other ways will the topic of racism be addressed?

If you cannot join a small group for the book discussion, or aren't sure where you might be on your own processing journey, you can still be involved. We'll be sharing an Additional

Resources page that will offer ways to be involved in the conversation. On Sunday mornings during Lent, our prayers will include language identifying and lifting up the brokenness that stems from racism.

What is going to happen after the book study?

On Sunday, April 23, all participants will gather for an evening potluck meal at the church. We will celebrate and give thanks for meaningful time together throughout the study, reflect on what we've learned, and begin to discern how God is calling us to continue addressing the issues and consequences of racism in our homes, workplaces, congregation, community, and country.

I still have some questions.

Excellent! Contact anyone from the list below and we will do our best to answer or find the answer to your question. Also keep your eyes on the Weekly Announcements for continued updates as Lent draws closer.

Pastor Dave Wegner	708-366-6900, ext. 208 dwegner@graceriverforest.org
Sue Foran	sforan4@comcast.net
John Lattyak	jlattyak@gmail.com
Gwen Gotsch	708-366-6900 ext. 229 ggotsch@graceriverforest.org

Church Vocations Scholarship

Through the Church Vocations Initiative, Grace Church provides support, encouragement, and financial assistance to members who wish to pursue a vocational ministry, either within the church or in the secular world. Anna Modrich is a recipient of a Vocations Scholarship for the 2016-17 school year. She is a junior at Concordia University Chicago this year, after two years of study at Concordia University Wisconsin. She shares this update about her first semester:

Living at home and going to school at Concordia Chicago has allowed me to become more involved with my faith at Grace where I grew up going to church. Since I have been home I have been a part of the youth mentor program. It has been a fun experience that I have learned a lot from. I hope to continue this program and grow to be a better mentor down the road and maintain connections with the 7th and 8th graders beyond the program. I appreciate the support I am receiving from Grace during my education and faith journey.

First Communion instruction

First communion classes for fourth grade students take place on Sunday mornings in Lent, beginning March 5 at 9:45 a.m. Children this age who already commune are invited to participate in the class along with their peers. Parents have received a letter with more information. Contact Children's Ministry Coordinator Julie Modrich with questions (708-366-6900 ext 229; jmodrich@graceriverforest.org).

Youth ministry book study begins on February 13

Join Pastor Lauren Wegner for a book study on "Sustainable Youth Ministry," by Mark DeVries. Our first meeting will take place Monday, Feb. 13, at 7 p.m. in the Youth Room. We will discuss the introduction and chapters 1-3. All are welcome! Please let Pastor Lauren know if you would like a book ordered for you (lwegner@graceriverforest.org).

Open our eyes to those with vision impairment

By Sue Ames, Parish Nurse

February is Low Vision Awareness Month. I am sure all of us have experiences with loved ones who have been affected by low vision, or we may be experiencing firsthand the challenges involved in navigating everyday life with impaired vision. I hope this article will provide information and resources to help support those struggling with low vision.

What is low vision?

As we age, our eyes age too. Many of these changes can be corrected with glasses or contact lens. However, if your eye doctor tells you that your vision cannot fully be corrected with ordinary prescription lenses, medical treatment or surgery and you still have some usable vision, you have what is called low vision. Having low vision means that even with regular glasses, contact lenses, medicine or surgery, people find everyday tasks, such as reading mail, shopping, preparing meals, and signing their name, difficult to do.

What causes low vision?

Low vision is usually caused by eye disease or health disorders, eye injuries, or birth defects. Common causes include:

- Age-related macular degeneration, which causes blurred or reduced central vision.
- Glaucoma — abnormally high pressure in the eye causing optic nerve damage.
- Diabetic retinopathy — damage to the blood vessels of retina (the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye) caused by diabetes.
- Retinitis pigmentosa — a genetic condition that causes retinal deterioration leading to vision loss.

Low vision affects 2.9 million Americans. It ranks behind only arthritis and heart disease as a reason for impaired daily functioning. The number of those affected is expected to increase 72% by 2030. Most people with low vision are 65 or older.

What can you do?

Keep your eyes healthy: Don't smoke. Wear sunglasses. Exercise and eat a healthy diet, and see your eye care provider regularly.

Learn about vision rehabilitation.

Vision rehabilitation helps people adapt to vision loss and maintain their quality of life. In addition to a primary eye care professional, the vision rehabilitation team may include occupational therapists, orientation and mobility instructors, low vision therapists, rehabilitation teachers, and adaptive technology specialists. These professionals can help people make the most of their vision and maintain their independence by teaching them how to move safely around the home, carry out daily living skills

safely, use magnifiers and other adaptive devices, and find additional resources and support

Eye care providers say they would offer more low vision products and services if patients simply asked for them. Only 1.4 percent of Americans with visual impairment aged 18 and older use vision rehabilitation services, and only 22 percent of people aged 18 and older with visual impairments use visual adaptive equipment.

When to seek medical advice

Get emergency medical care if you have sudden changes in vision or injury to your eye. Urgent vision-related medical conditions

include the sudden onset of:

- Severe eye pain or irritation.
- Vision loss or double vision.
- Eye floaters, flashes of light or halos around lights.
- Severe headache.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Numbness or weakness on one side of the body.
- Confusion, dizziness or trouble talking.

See a specialist in vision problems (an optometrist or ophthalmologist) if you experience any vision problems that impair your ability to read or write comfortably, drive safely, or participate in everyday activities.

Learn more about low vision

- Lighthouse for the Blind, 847-510-6200; chicagolighthouse.org
- National Eye Institute - www.nei.nih.gov/lowvision
- The Low Vision Council - www.lowvisioncouncil.org/lowvision
- American Foundation for the Blind — www.afb.org

Stop by the Health Cabinet table on Sunday, February 19, for additional information on this and other health-related topics. If you have an interest in participating in a Low Vision Support Group or would like more information on resources, please contact Sue Ames, Parish Nurse (708-366-6900 ext. 219; sames@gracriverforest.org).

Recycle your used glasses

The Lions Club International's Recycle for Sight program distributes used eyeglasses to people who need them. Bring your used but usable glasses and sunglasses, prescription and non-prescription, to the collection box at the Health Cabinet table in the atrium on February 19. Glasses will be donated to the Lions Club of Oak Park/River Forest for recycling.

Thank you for supporting the benefit for the Center for Christian Education in Martin, Slovakia

Nearly 100 people attended Grace Church's benefit evening for the Center for Christian Education (CCE) on January 28. Held in Fellowship Hall, the event featured an authentic Slovak dinner of roast pork with all the trimmings, plus a presentation from leaders of CCE and a raffle of exciting prizes. Entertainment was provided by members of Veselica, a Chicago dance troupe of Slovak-American children who performed traditional songs and dances. Proceeds benefit the continued renovation of CCE's Lutheran High School.

In July 2017, a mission team from Grace will again travel to Slovakia and teach CCE's Vacation Bible School. Last year's VBS program attracted 200 children ages 4 through rising fourth-graders. Some spaces for the 2017 trip are still available. Interested? Contact Julie Modrich, Ministry Coordinator (708-366-6900, ext. 229; jmodrich@graceriverforest.org).



Books for Black History Month in the library

Black History Month honors the contributions of African Americans to U. S. history and culture. These and other books will be featured in the Grace Church library and atrium case during February.

This Far by Faith: Stories from the African-American Religious Experience, by Juan Williams. W. Morrow, 2003. [200 WIL]

Awakening to Equality: A Young White Pastor at the Dawn of Civil Rights, by Karl E. Lutze. University of Missouri Press, 2006. The author is a long-time friend of Grace Church. [284.1 LUT]

The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration, by Isabel Wilkerson. Random House, 2010. The story of the decades-long migration of black citizens who fled the South for northern and western cities, in search of a better life. [304.8 WIL]

Freedom in the Family: A Mother-Daughter Memoir of the Fight for Civil Rights, by Tananarive Due. One World, 2003. [973 DUE]

The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother, by James McBride. Riverhead Books, 1997. [974 MCB]

Life Is So Good, by George Dawson and Richard Glaubman. Random House, 2000. Autobiography of a 101-year-old man who learned to read when he was 98. [976.4 DAW]

Not for children only --

God Bless the Child, by Billie Holliday and Arthur Herzog, Jr., illustrated by Jerry Pinckney. Armistad, 2004. Includes CD. This song was first performed by jazz vocalist Billie Holliday in 1939. The illustrator creates images of a family moving from the rural south to the urban north during the Great Migration. [E 780 HOL]

Henry's Freedom Box, by Ellen Levine, illustrated by Kadir Nelson. Scholastic Press, 2007. A fictional account of a true story from 1849 about a slave in Virginia who escapes to freedom. [FIC LEV]

Show Way, by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by Hudson Talbott. G. P. Putnam, 2005. A mother passes on the tradition of making quilts to "show ways" that serve as secret maps for freedom-seeking slaves. [E FIC WOO]

Volunteers staff the library on Sunday mornings. It is open for self-service during the week. All are welcome to check out books. Please ask the person at the reception desk for assistance with books in the atrium case.

GRACE NEWS

SANDWICH-MAKING AT FRATERNITÉ. Grace members will be packing lunches at Fraternité Notre Dame, 502 N. Central, on Monday, February 20, at 7 p.m. These lunches are given to people in need in the Austin community. Children and teens are welcome with their parents. Contact Kate Hogenson (hogenson@msn.com) to arrange a ride.

KNITTING/CROCHETING GROUP meets on Tuesday, February 21, 1–2:30 p.m. in the church library. Contact Margaret Burke (mrburke42@gmail.com) for more information.

LECTIO DIVINA meets on Monday, February 27, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. in the church library. Contact MaryBeth Buschmann (312-802-5493; marybeth1942@sbcglobal.net).

RETIRED LEADERS AND OTHERS meet on the second Tuesday of every month at Grace for informal presentations on a wide range of faith-related topics. Phyllis Kersten and Karl Reko speak on “Retirement for Church Leaders” on Tuesday, February 14, at 10 a.m. in the church library.

GRACE NOTES MAILING CREW. A lively crew of volunteers led by Marlene Hallman gathers monthly in the church library to prepare Grace Notes for mailing. They will be at work on the March newsletter on Thursday, March 2, at 9:30 a.m. There’s always a need for more helpers!

CORNERSTONES BIBLE STUDY. Older adults meet in the church library on Wednesdays. Come for food and fellowship at 10 a.m. and Bible study led by the pastors at 10:30. On February 15, there is a service of Morning Prayer at 11:30 followed by luncheon. There’s a Hymn Sing on February 22.

ROMEOS AND JULIETS meet in the church library at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, February 21, for a presentation and the usual donuts, coffee and Trivial Pursuit.

FINDING HOPE, the chronic illness support group, meets at Grace at 7:15 p.m. on Tuesday, March 7, at 7:15 p.m.

RELIGION IN LITERATURE. The book discussion group meets on Friday, February 17, at 8 p.m. Amy Claud will lead the discussion of Charles Dickens’s “Tale of Two Cities.” Chrissy and Michael Nelson are hosts (639 S. Lombard Ave., Oak Park). A copy of the book is available in the church library.

REEL TALK, the film discussion group, meets on Friday, February 10, at 6 p.m. in the church library to watch “Autumn Spring,” a 2001 film directed by Vladimír Michálek. The film deals with the subject of aging gracefully, telling the story of an aging prankster, his wife, and an ungrateful son who wants to whisk his parents off to the old folks’ home.

BUILDING HOURS. Grace will be closed for Presidents’ Day on Monday, February 20.

PRAYERS

WE PRAY for all who mourn the death of Connie Schwab, sister of Linda Schwab.

WE PRAY for all who mourn the death of Jim Dittman. The funeral service for Jim will be on Sunday, February 12, at 2 p.m.

PRAYER LIST. The weekly Prayer List can be found in the worship bulletin on Sunday. Contact Karen Christopher (kchristopher@graceriverforest.org; 708-366-6900 ext 207) to be included on the published prayer list.

PRAYER CHAIN. Contact Kathy Lucht (kathy.lucht@gmail.com) or Kathy Garness

ALTAR FLOWERS

Sign up at the reception desk to donate flowers to remember a loved one or commemorate a special birthday or anniversary. Donors of flower in February:

February 5 from Boy Scout Troop 66 and Cub Scout Pack 66 in honor of worldwide Boy Scout Sunday.

February 12 from Jim and Judy Kerns, celebrating their 30th wedding anniversary.

THANK YOU

Dear Grace members,

Thank you for the overwhelming grace, love and support your cards provided my wife, Michelle, and me. We laughed at first and thought our mailman may have been hoarding our mail, but were welcomed by a wonderful surprise. Prayers and blessings to everyone at Grace from Kris and Michelle Grahnke.

Follow our journey at gronksgrace.blogspot.com.

PASTORAL CARE

**Emergency pastoral care
708-689-3032**

Call this number for emergency pastoral care on weekends, or when the Grace building is closed. Please include a return phone number if you leave a message or send a text.

New members class

The next New Members class will begin on Sunday, March 26, and continue on Sunday mornings between services through - May 21. Contact Karen Christopher for more information, or if you know someone who might appreciate an invitation to join the class.



Grace School students and their families enjoyed a fun evening at the Sharing Our Talents show on January 27 in Fellowship Hall. There were skits, dances, musical performances and more. Proceeds from refreshments will support arts programming at the school via A Graceful Evening's Fund A Need auction.

News from Grace School

Compete at the Trivia Night on February 17 and support A Graceful Evening. Grace Church members (21 years and older) are invited to join the school community and compete in a trivia night supporting A Graceful Evening on Friday, February 17, 6:30–9 p.m., in Fellowship Hall. Appetizers and drinks will be served, and there's a prize for the winning team. Please RSVP to the school office with your name and (if applicable) the names of your team members (teams of four) by February 10. The cost is \$10/person, plus a donation of a bottle of wine (valued at \$20 or more) for the Wine Pull, or two beer bombers for the auction. Childcare will be available for a freewill donation to support the summer mission trip to Slovakia.

Enrollment for 2017-18. Thirty families were welcomed by Grace students, parents and teachers to the Grace School Open House on Wednesday evening, Jan. 25. Current school families are completing the re-enrollment process for next year. If you are interested in enrolling a student in Grace School, or if you would like to know more about preschool, junior and senior kindergarten and elementary programs at Grace, please call the school office. (708-366-6900) and set up an appointment to tour the school and meet with principal Bill Koehne.

The Annual Fund for Grace School has received more than 70 contributions, totaling more than \$25,000, a significant increase over last year at this time. Thank you for supporting Grace Lutheran School!

Come to A Graceful Evening!

Enjoy a friendly evening out with the Grace Church and School community at the annual dinner-auction fundraiser for Grace School.

- Proceeds from A Graceful Evening support the school's operating budget.
- Money raised in this year's Fund A Need auction will support arts programming at the school.

Event organizers are seeking auction items, program ads, and sponsorships, as well as bottles of wine for the wine pull. Contact Rebecca Morgan for more information (rebecca.morgan04@gmail.com or 708-476-8905).

TICKETS
\$75/person
\$700/table of ten
 online at
GraceRiverForest.org



Family Fun Friday



February 10, 6-8 pm

Church and School family social

- Games and crafts for kids K-6
- Time with friends for 7-8 students
- Fellowship for parents
- Pizza and salad supper for all.

*Please register online at GraceRiverForest.org by midnight on February 9.
Younger siblings are welcome. Suggest donation: \$5/person or \$20/family*



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