

April 2017

Just when we're settling in ...

by Pastor Lauren Wegner

This winter was pretty weird. Even as a southern transplant experiencing my first Chicago winter, I knew it wasn't typical. In fact, I was craving snow in January and February! I couldn't believe I was living up north without any snow for two winter months.

And then there were those strange few days in January that felt spring-like. Our family donned t-shirts and sunglasses and headed to the park to play. We soaked up the warmth and the sun. For that brief time, it felt like we were back in North Carolina.

"Don't get used to it," I was kindly warned by several Chicagoans.

And then, in the middle of March, we had a good helping of snow dumped on us. I know that in itself is not atypical of this area, but it certainly elicited a lot of comments and surprise. "Really? Snow—now?" Winter wasn't about to let us settle into any assumptions about what was in store.

"Don't get used to it," Mother Nature seemed to say.

I snapped a picture of the Memorial Garden during the March snowfall. There was something about the white, cold, powdery layers resting on the stone in that quiet space that intrigued me. This place of holy rest for loved ones was blanketed in frozen water. Flakes, not drips. Frozen, not flowing. God had poured water on the resting place of the saints, and it remained there, a



visible sign of baptism and the purity of Christ bestowed on us. It was a sight I wasn't used to.

Sometimes I think the seasons of the Church year help keep us from complacency. Just when we're settling into the gift of Jesus in Christmas and the light of the Christ Child in Epiphany, we're thrust into the stark and somber reminders of Christ's death—and our own—during Lent. We walk with Jesus to the cross, our spirits reflective and honest about the truths of our sinful humanity. And just when our lives seem settled in the reality of

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... God says, “Don’t get used to it”

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sinfulness, just when our spirits seem resigned to our brokenness, just when our faith seems disappointingly predictable...

God says, “Don’t get used to it.”

Just when those who watched Jesus die were sure they had cried all their tears...

God says, “Don’t get used to it.”

Just when the stone covering the tomb was settling into the earth...

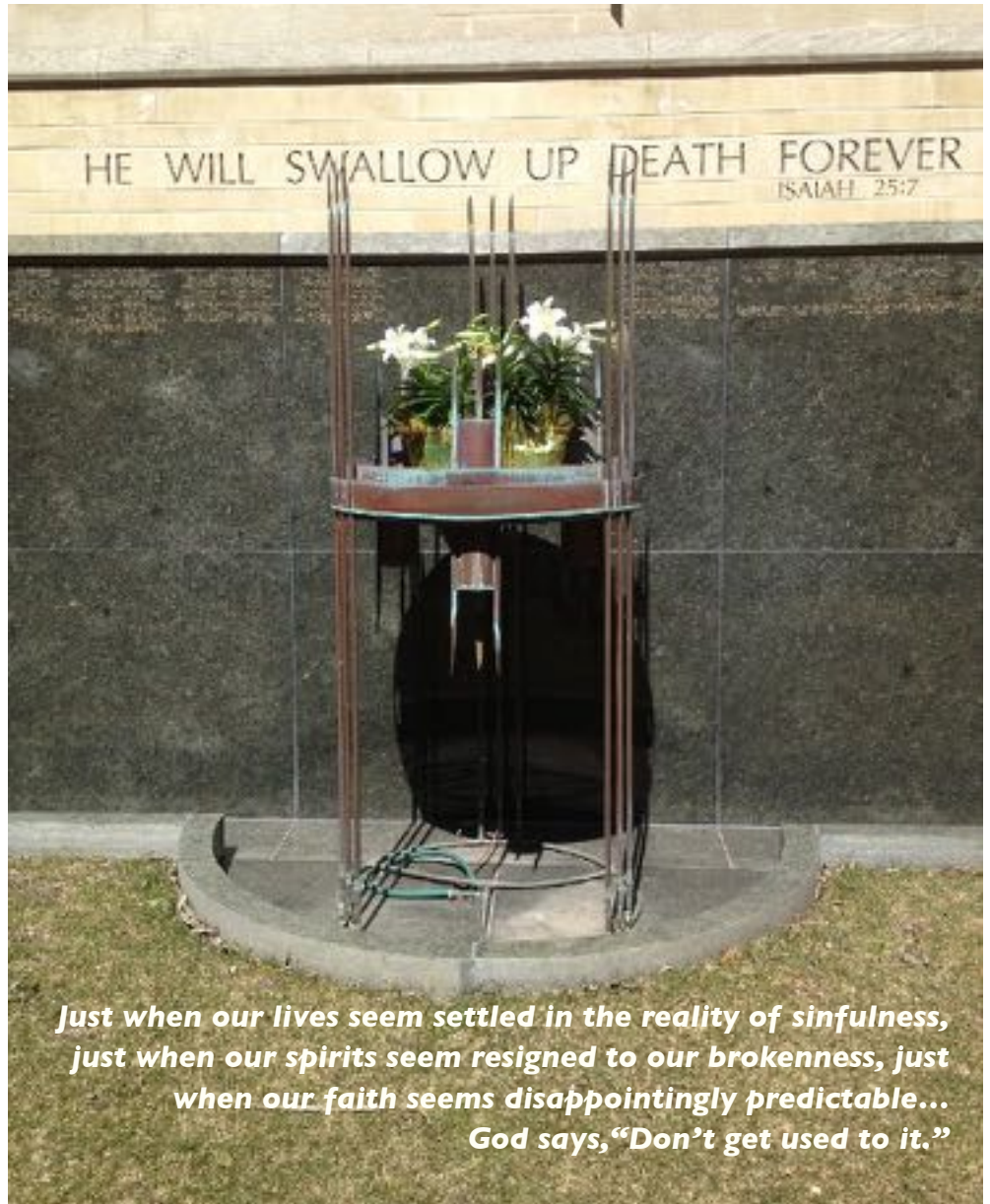
God says, “Don’t get used to it.”

Just when it seemed that death had the last word...

God says, “Don’t get used to it.”

By the time this newsletter is in your hands, I imagine all the snow will have melted. I’m not sure if any more snow is in our future, but I’m certainly not ruling it out. We may see the saints covered in snow again this year. And we will certainly be reminded at Easter—whether it’s snowy, bitterly cold, rainy, foggy, sunny, or warm—that God is full of surprises for all the saints. So lean into Lent. Lean into each of life’s seasons. Lean into life, and lean into death.

But don’t get used to it.



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, March 31, with the hope that it will arrive in your mailbox no later than April 7. Copies are also available at Grace.

Deadlines and submissions. The May issue of Grace Notes will be mailed on Friday, April 27. The deadline for copy is Wednesday, April 19; the issue covers events through the end of May. 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.

WORSHIP

April 2

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Holy Communion at 8:30 and 11 a.m.

Joshua 5:9-12, Psalm 32, 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Wednesday, April 5

LENT MID-WEEK SERVICE

Morning Prayer at 11:30 a.m., Evening Prayer 7 p.m.

Supper in Fellowship Hall at 6 p.m.

April 9

SUNDAY OF THE PASSION / PALM SUNDAY

Holy Communion at 8:30 and 11 a.m.

Isaiah 50:4-9a, Psalm 31:9-16, Philippians 2:5-11, Matthew 26:14--27:66

Monday – Wednesday, April 10-12

HOLY WEEK

Responsive Prayer with the school children, 8:30 a.m.

THE THREE DAYS

MAUNDY THURSDAY, April 13

Holy Communion at 8:30 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Exodus 12:1-14, Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, John 13:1-17, 31-35

GOOD FRIDAY, April 14

Adoration of the Cross at 8:30 a.m., noon and 7 p.m.

Isaiah 52:13--53:12, Psalm 22, Hebrews 10:16-25, John 18:1-19:42

Hillert setting of the St. John Passion at noon

EASTER VIGIL, April 15, 7 p.m.

Old Testament readings, Romans 6:3-11, John 20:1-18

EASTER SUNDAY

RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD, April 16

Holy Communion at 8:30 and 11 a.m.

Acts 10:34-43, Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24, Colossians 3:1-4, Matthew 28:1-10

April 23

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

Holy Communion at 8:30 and 11 a.m.

Acts 2:14a, 22-32, Psalm 16, 1 Peter 1:3-9, John 20:19-31

April 30

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

Holy Communion at 8:30 and 11 a.m.

Acts 2:14a, 36-41, Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19, 1 Peter 1:17-23, Luke 24:13-35

Sunday morning help wanted

Altar Guild: "The gifts of God for the people of God"

The sacraments of Holy Communion and Holy Baptism bind God's people of Grace and the world's community of Christian faith. Grace Church's Altar Guild is seeking volunteers to join in the ministry of preparation of these sacraments for 8:30 am/11:00 am Sunday services, festival services, weddings, funerals and school communion services. To find out more about Grace Church's Altar Guild, please contact Roberta Gillespie or the church office (708-366-6900). Be a part of, "Come, for all is now ready."

May is "Usher Get-Acquainted Month"

Grace Ushers will be sponsoring a spring "Usher Get-Acquainted Month" in May where youth, adults and couples can "try out" being an usher for anywhere from one worship service to a month of services. There is no commitment, and if you wish to continue being an usher on an usher team, you may. No experience is necessary; there is on-the-job-training at both 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. services. Contact Chief Usher Don Heimbürger to get started. Email him at don@heimburgerhouse.com.

Grace Church's welcome begins with greeters

Greeters are the friendly people who say hello when you come in the doors at Grace on Sunday mornings. Greeters greet everyone-- young and old, familiar faces, new faces, Grace members and visitors. Radical welcome begins with a simple "Good morning!" Contact Marge Sanger if you'd like to give greeting a try.



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).

April 2

Ecology and Worship

*Ben Stewart, Gordon Braatz Professor of Worship,
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago*

What do Christian worship and ecology have in common? Literally everything. Both worship and ecology extend our vision in wonder to see how the entire cosmos — everything — is interconnected and works together for good, even “very good.” This class is the second in a two-week series exploring the ways in which Christian worship links the songs of earth and heaven.

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. The group will not meet on April 16 (Easter) and April 23.

April 23 and 30

The Complexities of Addressing God as Father in the Epistle to the Hebrews

Amy Peeler, Professor, New Testament, Wheaton College

The Epistle to the Hebrews stands as one of the great theological documents of the New Testament. This powerful sermon-letter provides pithy phrases and deep theological principles that have shaped the thought and life of the church. The first session on April 23 introduces the epistle, including its possible historical setting (“Who wrote Hebrews?” is an age-old question) and outlines its logic and major themes.

Part two on April 30 focuses on the often ignored, but vital theme in Hebrews of the Fatherhood of God. Because the author introduces God as the Father of Jesus Christ and the Father of the Epistle’s readers, Hebrews provides insight into the paternal character of God. The second class on April 30 addresses the challenges and blessings for contemporary believers in addressing God as our Father, with Hebrews as our guide.

The good news of Easter in church library books

Books from the church library can enrich your celebration of the Easter season. You’ll find books there with more details about the Biblical accounts and the liturgies of Holy Week and Easter, as well as picture books that will be enjoyed by adults and children and thoughtful meditations on the meaning of Christ’s resurrection in our lives. Look for these titles and others on display in the church library and in the cabinet in the atrium. Please ask the person at the reception desk for assistance with checking out books in the glass case.

Bread and Wine: Readings for Lent and Easter. Orbis Books, 2005. Meditations from well-known spiritual writers. [234.34 BRE]

In the Fullness of Time: A Historian Looks at Christmas, Easter and the Early Church, by Paul L. Maier. Concordia, 1991. Part 2 focuses on Easter. [232.9 MAI]

The Mystery of Easter, by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Crossroad, 1997. [232.96 BON]

Martin Luther’s Easter Book, ed. Roland Bainton. Augsburg, 1997. [232.96 LUT]

The Three-Day Feast: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter, by Gail Ramshaw. Augsburg Fortress, 2004. [242.34 RAM]

Not for children only –

Peter’s First Easter, by Walter Wangerin. Zonderkidz, 2000. Told from Simon Peter’s viewpoint. [J 232.96]

The Very First Easter, by Paul L. Maier. Concordia, 1999. [J 394.2 MAI]

Sunrise Hill, by Kathleen Long Bostrom. Zonderkidz, 2004. An Easter story that shares an inspiring message of faith, hope and courage. [E FIC BOS]

The Legend of the Easter Robin, by Dandi Daley Mackall. Zonderkidz, 2010. An Easter story of compassion and faith. [E FIC MAC]

Volunteers staff the library on Sunday mornings. It is open for self-service during the week. All are welcome to check out books.

Church Council adopts welcome statement

At its March meeting, the Church Council adopted the following statement of welcome for use in our Sunday morning bulletins, the church website, and other publications as appropriate:

In the name of Jesus Christ, we welcome you as we gather to hear God's holy Word and celebrate the meal of Holy Communion. We are blessed by your presence, just as you are. As God welcomes all people through the saving grace of Jesus, so do we seek to welcome God's people of all races, social statuses, physical and mental abilities, sexual orientations, and gender identities to be together in Christ – to love, to grow, and to serve.

Should you have no church home, you are invited to consider Grace. We encourage you to fill out the perforated page on the back of the bulletin and place it in the offering plate. Welcome!

The statement of welcome was brought to the Council by the Ad Hoc Committee to Consider Sexual Orientation Issues and has the endorsement of the Grace pastoral staff. The Ad Hoc Committee felt that the time was right to create a statement of welcome. This decision was based on the following, discerned over the course of the committee's work so far:

- Almost uniformly, church members have expressed interest in welcoming all individuals to worship without regard to sexual orientation, gender identity, or other LGBTQ status.
- For many, this interest emanates from scripture and Christ's call to love each other and minister to each other's needs.
- Several members expressed dismay that Grace should have to go through study of these issues in order to be fully welcoming.
- Some members, although wishing to be welcoming, expressed concern that we not follow a path to welcoming some at the exclusion of others.
- Some members made clear that, in order to welcome individuals who may be gay or transgender, we must be express in our intent to do so; this seems particularly important for those in the LGBTQ community to actually feel welcomed.

The Council was not unanimous in its decision to approve the statement; the vote was eight in favor, three against. As in many areas of our life together, we do not share unity of belief and opinion in these matters. There remains, however, our unity in Christ. I am heartened by the decision, as the statement helps us more broadly share that most important unity with others. In Romans 6:5, Paul writes, "For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his." At Grace, we continue to find our center in our crucified and risen Lord, Jesus Christ. From this center, we are called to proclaim the gospel and welcome others into the community of faith we share.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Dave Lyle

Every Member Visit (EMV) Update

The Elders are pleased to report that the Every Member Visit (EMV) initiative is progressing to the point we should begin seeing some results. We have compiled all of the comments received in three categories: joys, concerns, and suggestions. We further divided the comments in each of those categories to the various boards and committees to which we felt they related.

At the congregation leadership meeting at the end of February, the Elders distributed the breakdown of the comments to the appropriate board or committee for its further detailed review and consideration.

Some suggestions from the EMV data have already been implemented – one example was the addition of the eight o'clock Christmas Eve service. Another example already under study is the possibility of providing transportation to and from worship services for those who need that assistance. There will be more information to come on transportation. We anticipate more implementation of suggestions as each board and committee does its review of the EMV results.

Al Swanson
Chair, Board of Elders

New members class continues through May

It's not too late to join the New Members class that began on Sunday, March 26. It will continue on Sunday mornings between services through May 21. Talk to the pastors, or contact Karen Christopher (708-366-6900 ext 207; kchristopher@gracriveforest.org) for more information, or if you know someone who might appreciate an invitation to join the class.

Bach's St. John Passion begins Holy Week at Grace

The Bach Cantata Vespers performances of the St. John Passion offer a unique opportunity to prepare for the celebration of Holy Week and Easter.

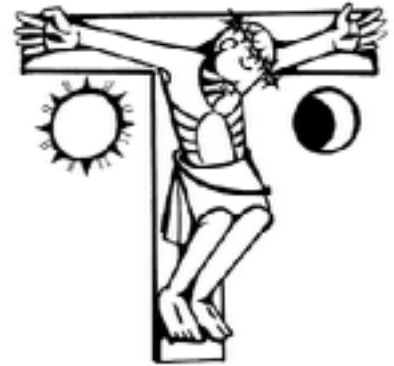
In the Passion, J. S. Bach dramatizes the text of John 18 and 19 so that listeners experience the power of the events of Christ's passion, from Judas' betrayal in the garden through the trial before Pilate to Jesus' death and burial.

Bach's setting is highly dramatic. A tenor soloist, the Evangelist, sings the narration as other soloists portray Jesus and Pilate. The chorus is the angry crowd that shouts "Crucify him!" but it also sings the tender, familiar chorales that reflect on the meaning of Jesus' suffering in our lives. Beautiful arias with a variety of orchestral sonorities provide additional cues for prayer and meditation.

Listening to the St. John Passion truly is a worship experience. Bach composed the piece for the Good Friday worship service at the St. Nicholas Church in Leipzig, Germany, on April 7, 1724, and revised it several times for additional performances throughout his life. It's in two parts, and in Bach's day there was a sermon between the two. In the performances at Grace there will be a brief devotional between the parts; the entire performance will take approximately two hours and fifteen minutes.

The performances at Grace, on Saturday, April 8, at 7 p.m. and Sunday, April 9, at 4 p.m., feature the Bach Cantata Vespers Chorus and Orchestra, along with Chicago Choral Artists and highly accomplished soloists. A preview lecture about the work begins one hour before each performance in the sanctuary.

You do not need to reserve tickets ahead of time. Seating is first come, first served. There will be a freewill offering between parts one and two of the performance. Childcare will be available.



JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH	April 8, 7 p.m. and April 9, 4 p.m.
ST. JOHN	Bach Cantata Vespers Chorus and Orchestra
PASSION	<i>in collaboration with Chicago Choral Artists</i>
	Michael D. Conello, director
	How Brook, tenor (Evangelist)
	Kevra Kera, baritone (Judas)
	Susan Nelson, soprano
	Karen Brunsen, mezzo-soprano
	Patrick McElhiney, tenor
	Douglas Anderson, baritone
	Performed without intermission
	Free admission ■ \$25 Suggested Donation ■ Childcare available

Important dates in the lives of our young people

Grace's younger members celebrate significant faith formation milestones during Holy Week and the Easter season. Support them on these special occasions, and help them celebrate!

First Communion. Fourth-grade students have been preparing for their First Communion during Lent. Many will receive communion for the first time on Palm Sunday, April 9, wearing special white garments. Join them in Fellowship Hall between services as they talk about the garment they've created to express their faith and its role in their lives.

Confirmation Witness Service, Saturday, April 29, 4 p.m. (New day and time this year.) Eighth-grade confirmands will present their witness statements in a Saturday afternoon service. As they prepare these statements, students are asked to think about their life and about their faith and about the multitude of connection points between them. Their presentations testify to God's power in their lives. A reception follows the service in Fellowship Hall.

Confirmation, Sunday, April 30, 11 a.m. Our eighth-grade confirmands will renew their baptismal vows in the rite of confirmation during the 11 a.m. worship service.

Faith Promise Sunday is May 7

What is Faith Promise Sunday? A Faith Promise is a commitment of financial support for Grace Lutheran Church. A pledge is made by members to provide funds for the church's ministries for the new fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2017. We follow a practical and faithful approach to planning our budget for the fiscal year, and part of that planning is knowing we can depend on Grace members' faithful giving throughout the year. Members will receive Faith Promise cards in a mailing in April. Cards will be collected at both services on Sunday, May 7.

We asked our three pastors for their thoughts on the importance of supporting Grace Lutheran Church with our Faith Promise commitments. As you read their reflections, look for the words we associate with faithful giving — discipline, discipleship, investment, gratitude and trust.

Pastor Dave Lyle

What does the discipleship of giving mean to you and your family? Our daughter, Greta, is taking piano lessons right now and one of the things we are teaching her is that you don't automatically become good at the piano — you get there by practicing. Practicing becomes a discipline, a rhythm of living. It's important for us to practice regular giving as a way of showing our thanks and faithfulness to God in our own lives on a daily basis.

As Christians and as people of God, we are called to practice faithful giving as a sign of remembering that everything we have has been given to us by God. Releasing all those gifts back to God is a way of worshipping God and serving God and our neighbors in need. It is also a reminder to ourselves that in faith we can let go of those gifts and trust that God will continue to take care of us out of his divine abundance.

What is the pastoral team's vision for Grace next year? Our emerging vision for Grace is to be people who are together in Christ, to love, to grow, and to serve. This year we will be focusing especially on areas of fellowship — how we build deep meaningful connections together; faith formation — how we deepen our relationship with God; and service — how we share God's love with the world. All our financial gifts offered to Grace help support those key elements of our

vision for ministry in this season of our church's life.

Pastor Dave Wegner

What impact do our financial gifts have on our ministry outside of Grace?

The financial gifts of Grace extend well beyond this community. This last year alone we have given contributions to over 30 ministry partners in the Chicago area, around the country and around the world. These ministries make a difference to people we may never meet, people who act and look differently than us. When you make a financial pledge to Grace, 10 percent of your gifts immediately leave this place to make a difference in the world.

What does the discipline of giving mean to you? Discipline can be interchanged with the word practice. We want to practice the skill of financial giving and over time, give more — more of ourselves, more of our time, more of our resources, more of our dollars. When we look back at a practicing journey like that, we see that the discipline has made giving a daily part of our lives, a daily part of the choices that we make to reflect the values that we hold dear.

Pastor Lauren Wegner

Why are you so passionate about pledging and stewardship? I grew up in a household where giving was ingrained in us. It was give, save, spend in that order. It wasn't just what you did with your money, it was how you lived your life with everything you had been given. I have always been drawn to the reality of Christian life that is giving first fruits. Our response to receiving a gift is thanksgiving. We say thank you, God —



**For where your treasure is,
there your heart will be also.**

— Matthew 6:21

now use this gift to your glory. When we give our first gifts to God, that impacts how we use the rest of that stuff we have. Our whole way of living with our resources changes.

Sometimes it is hard to know where to start giving or the next step if you are already giving. I often tell people who don't know where to start — just start somewhere. Just do it and see how God abundantly blesses you through your gifts. And you will want to give more of yourself and your resources. Because it is sacrificial giving it's going to hurt a little bit and it should. That "hurt" of giving will inspire the other ways that we use our finances and our resources.

God blesses us when we give. What has deepened my faith is that I can never recall a time where God has not provided for every need in my life. Giving has always been a part of my life and I have never experienced a time where I regretted giving. In fact, I always wanted to give more. My faith and my awareness of God's presence have been deepened by faithful giving.

Talk with members of the Stewardship Committee in the atrium on Sunday, April 23. You can also watch video clips from our pastors talking about what faithful giving means to them and the importance of making our financial commitments to Grace.

The Stewardship Committee

Racism conversations: What's next?



As Holy Week approaches, the Lenten book discussion groups on racism are winding up their conversations. What have these discussions been like?

Every group experience is unique. One group reports simply “great discussions. We are all enjoying the experience.” Here’s a more detailed report from the facilitator of another group:

The important and startling information on “systemic” racism is the biggest idea that we have encountered. That each of us is part of the problem. To realize our race is the cultural norm. That systemic means not only are some pulled down but that others are built up and we are beneficiaries of that “building up.”

There is a question of “Where do we go from here?”

Participants in the racism discussion will address that question—what next?—when they gather for a potluck dinner on the Sunday after Easter, April 23. They’ll have an opportunity not only to share their reactions to the book “Waking Up White,” by Debby Irving, but also to think about next steps. How can we as Christians be a part of dismantling racism in American society?

Exploring green issues at Grace ...



Did you know that Grace belongs to the Oak Park River Forest Interfaith Green Network? And that Grace’s landscaping is going native and organic?

What else could our congregation be doing to work toward sustainability in our use of natural resources? Is this a topic that interests

you? Mary Margaret Bartley, Grace’s representative to the Interfaith Green Network, would like to know more about Grace members’ interest in green issues. What can we work on together, as we serve one another and our community?

Come to a meeting on Tuesday, April 25, 7 p.m. at

Grace for an informal discussion of green issues and how they intersect with our mission and ministry. Contact Mary Margaret Bartley for more information.

“The Interconnectedness of All Things on Earth: From Oak Park to the Amazon.” Members of Oak Park’s various faith communities are invited to an Earth Day dinner, presentation and service at Oak Park Temple, 1235 N. Harlem, on Friday, April 21, 6–9 p.m. RSVP to 708-386-3937. The presentation, will feature Amy Rosenthal of the MacArthur Foundation, specialist on ecosystems and the Amazon, and Dr. Jason Funk of the Center for Carbon Removal.

There is reason to hope. Honest, vulnerable conversations have the power to change lives. We saw this in the gospel lesson on Sunday, March 19, the story of the Samaritan woman’s encounter with Jesus at the well. As Pastor Dave Wegner said in his sermon on that Sunday:

I wonder what Jesus saw when he looked into the eyes of the Samaritan woman by that well? Perhaps more critically, I wonder what she saw when she returned his gaze with her own? They certainly both saw a prejudice, not of their own making, perhaps, but one acknowledged nonetheless.

Nevertheless that simple connection by the well changed not only the woman’s life, but the lives of her neighbors, with whom she shared the good news of the gospel. We pray that our Lenten conversations about racism can change us.

Because it is time for us to be vulnerable about our own stories of race and privilege. We need to ask genuine and honest questions because we don’t have all the answers, and perhaps too many opinions to bear.

We remember that, like the woman at the well, we are transformed by our interactions with one another and with God.

Reclaiming Southwest Chicago: the “resurrection” of a neighborhood

United Power’s Reclaiming Southwest Chicago is a comprehensive effort to rebuild a neighborhood hit hard by the housing crisis and foreclosures. In the initial target area between Rockwell and California and 63rd and 59th Streets, crime has been cut in half, schools have improved and hundreds of families have saved their homes. Learn more at a presentation on April 23, 3–4:30 p.m. at Ascension Church, 601 Van Buren in Oak Park. Andy Massmann is Grace’s representative to United Power. Contact him at andrewmassmann@yahoo.com.

Gaza 5K supports relief programs

On April 29, UNRWA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, will hold the second annual Chicago Gaza 5K Run and Walk. Proceeds from the Run and Walk benefit UNRWA’s Community Mental Health Program, which helps empower vulnerable refugees in Gaza, especially children, to better cope with the extreme challenges they face on a daily basis. Last year’s race in Chicago raised over \$95,000. To register or to donate please visit the web-site at www.gaza5k.org. Contact Sue Foran if you’d like to join a team of Grace walkers.

Cards and prayer squares bring springtime hope and support to Veterans at Hines

By Sue Ames, Parish Nurse

As part of Family Sunday activities on February 26, Grace Sunday School students and their families decorated cards for veterans receiving care in the substance abuse and inpatient psychiatric units at the Hines Veterans Administration Hospital in Maywood. Prayer Shawl Ministry volunteers made 70 prayer squares to coordinate with the cards. The cards and prayer squares will be delivered to the vets during Lent.

This outreach effort was a product of collaboration between a number of ministries at Grace: the Social Ministry Committee developed the idea; the Children, Youth and Family Ministry, coordinated by Julie Modrich, made the event happen; the Prayer Shawl Ministry, part of the Health Cabinet, provided vibrant prayer squares; and Pastor Dave Wegner contributed critical insight and brainstorming.

The Social Ministry Committee connected with Erin Mooney-Simkus, an art therapist at Hines, through an introduction from then parish nurse Kim Ramos and another congregation member. Mooney-Simkus works with patients in both the psychiatric and substance abuse units, typically in group therapy. Mooney-Simkus uses art in various ways. “I offer art as a way of coping; it can be a form of relaxation and help people express themselves. I also offer art as meditation and for self-awareness. We make art on a topic or work on different projects.”

The cards were designed by a Grace School parent. The cutout on the front of the card reveals a small part of a larger picture that was colored here at Grace. The recipient at Hines is invited to finish the picture in his or her own way. Thus, it becomes a collaborative work of art.



Adding prayer squares to the project came after an “ah-hah!” moment from a Social Ministry Committee member who felt the squares might offer another source of comfort to the patients receiving the cards. Instead of incorporating crosses into the design, the usual practice with prayer squares, the squares that will accompany the cards for the vets are embellished with patriotic or healing messages.

About the Social Ministry Committee. Grace’s Social Ministry Committee is one of the standing committees at Grace. Its purpose is to help Grace members support people in need in our communities and to facilitate hands-on service projects for this purpose. They’re always interested in new members—and occasional helpers, too! Contact Stephanie Wilkening (stephwilkening@gmail.com) for more information.

About Hines. The Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital is located on 147 acres at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Roosevelt Road in Maywood. It served more than 57,000 veterans in fiscal year 2014. Edward Hines, Jr., a native of Chicago, served in France during the First World War and died of pneumonia in 1918 at the age of 22. The land was donated by his father, Edward Hines, Sr., the president of Edward Hines Lumber Company. The first veteran was admitted in 1921.

Health-Wise Wellness Class

April 25, 1-2:30 p.m., in the church library

Join Parish Nurse Sue Ames for the second of three sessions on managing your health and your health care. This month’s topic is “Health Wise Aging,” with a discussion of the myths, gifts and challenges of aging, as well as planning for the future. Call or email Sue for more information (708-366-6900 ext 219; sames@graceriverforest.org).

GRACE NEWS

SANDWICH-MAKING AT FRATERNITÉ. Grace members will be packing lunches at Fraternité Notre Dame, 502 N. Central, on Monday, April 17, 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, April 18, 1–2:30 p.m. in the church library. Contact Margaret Burke (for more information).

LECTIO DIVINA meets on Monday, April 24, 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 April 11, 10 a.m., in the church library for a presentation from Kathryn Johnson, director for ecumenical and inter-religious relations on “Whither Lutheranism in the 21st Century?” Guests are welcome.

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 May newsletter on Thursday, April 27, at 9:30 a.m. They welcome more helpers!

CORNERSTONES BIBLE STUDY. Older adults meet in the church library on Wednesdays for food and fellowship at 10 a.m. On April 5 there is Bible study with the pastors at 10:30 a.m. and a service of Morning Prayer at 11:30 a.m. Cornerstones will not meet during Holy Week or Easter Week, April 12 and 19. On April 26 there’s a hymn sing at 10:30.

ROMEOS AND JULIETS are on hiatus while they reorganize.

FINDING HOPE, the chronic illness support group, meets at Grace at 7:15 p.m. on Tuesday, April 4 at 7:15 p.m.

RELIGION IN LITERATURE. The book discussion group meets on Friday, April 21, 8 p.m., to discuss Henrik Ibsen’s play “Peer Gynt,” led by Steve Kaufman. Steve and Nancy Kaufmann are the hosts. A copy of the book is available in the church library. All are welcome.

REEL TALK, the film discussion group, meets on Friday, April 28, at 6 p.m. in the church library to watch “Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind.”

THANK YOU to all who supported Grace Church's recent dinner event to benefit the Center for Christian Education in Martin, Slovakia. Well over 100 people volunteered their time, made a financial gift, attended the event, donated a raffle prize, or shopped for beautiful hand-crafted Slovak needlework in the atrium the next day. In all, the benefit weekend raised more than \$17,000 for CCE's Lutheran High School.

Interested in learning more about CCE? A mission team of adults and youth will journey to Martin in July to teach a week of Vacation Bible School. No prior teaching experience necessary; all materials will be provided. The complete cost of the trip is approximately \$2500 per person. For information, see Julie Modrich.

PRAYERS

WE PRAY for Linda Webb, on the death of her son, Kevin; for Douglas Anderson and family on the death of his mother, Ruth; for Carl Grapentine, on the death of his mother, Eleanor; and for Carl Zehnder, on the death of his brother, George.

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 (708-366-7584; KMGfinearts@comcast.net) with confidential prayer chain requests.

CELEBRATION

WE CELEBRATE with Ayden Scott Casmer, son of Michael Casmer and Kelly Suga, and Dean Edwin Kammer, son of Eric and Courtney Kammer, who will be baptized on April 23.

ALTAR FLOWERS

Sign up at the reception desk to donate flowers to remember a loved one or commemorate a special birthday or anniversary.

Easter Sunday. The large flower arrangements that will decorate the chancel on Easter Sunday are given in memory of Margo Bonebrake by her family. The potted plants in the chancel on Easter Sunday are given in memory of Marcia Fogue, by her husband Dennis.

THANK YOU

Thank you to all those who donated items to the Lutheran social services Virgin Islands. They were very happy to receive them. The charity helps orphans, seniors, and developmentally disabled adults.

PASTORAL CARE

Call 708-689-3032 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.



Save the dates for Vacation Bible School

Monday–Friday, June 12–16
8:30 a.m. – noon

*Step back in time with the
Apostle Paul and experience what
life was like in first-century Rome.*

There's lots that's new about VBS in 2017

New time

VBS is in the morning, 8:30 a.m. to noon, with drop-off from 8–8:30 a.m.

New all-day option

An extended care option is available from noon–5 p.m. each day.

Expanded age group

VBS is for children from age 3 through current 5th graders

Registration information will be available soon,
online at graceriverforest.org and at the reception desk.

Confirmation Intensive for current 6th and 7th graders

Save the dates for Confirmation Intensive
Monday–Thursday, June 12–15, 5:30–8:30 p.m.

A Graceful Evening was a huge success—thank you!



A Graceful Evening was a lot of fun and a huge success! The March 18 event raised over \$85,000 for the Grace School fine arts program and general operating budget. This total is \$30,000 more than last year! Amazing!

Thank you to everyone involved, including sponsors, auction donors and bidders, everyone who attended the event, and everyone made a donation to the Fund-A-Need.

Special thanks go out to co-chairs: Jennifer Brayton, Mara Hutton, Rebecca Morgan,

and Kathryn Schmahl, and the many other volunteers who helped make A Graceful Evening 2017 the best one yet.

News from Grace School

SCAMP day camp for children age 3–5.

Grace School is once again offering a summer day camp experience for preschoolers age 3–5, taught by Grace kindergarten teacher Jackie Johnson. The two-week program runs from June 19–30, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to noon. Campers must be 3 years old by June 1 and potty-trained. The daily routine includes time for indoor and outdoor play, science and language exploration, arts and crafts, songs, and special events. Download the registration form by clicking on School at graceriverforest.org, or call Eileen Maggio in the school office for more information (708-366-6901). The fee for the two-week program is \$150.

Enrollment for 2017-18. 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 (708-366-6901) and set up an appointment to tour the school and meet with principal Bill Koehne.

CycleBar fundraiser for Grace School.

Join Grace Lutheran School and CycleBar, 7513 Lake Street in River Forest, on April 27 at 8 p.m. for a fun 50-minute workout, accessible for all fitness levels.. There will be refreshments in the community room following the ride. Over half the event spots were sold at A Graceful Evening, but there are 25 more bikes open. Cost is \$25 and all proceeds benefit Grace School. To register, go to graceriverforest.org, click on School, then go to News and Events at the bottom of the page.

Blankets and bookmarks. Grace School celebrated Lutheran Schools Week March 13–17 with dress-up days, special assemblies and service projects. The students decorated bookmarks for congregation members and placed them in hymnals in church. Chapel buddies (pairs of older and younger students) worked together to make fleece blankets that will be shared with people in our Grace community in need of comfort and warmth.



HOLY WEEK AND

EASTER WORSHIP

MAUNDY THURSDAY, April 13

Holy Communion at 8:30 a.m. and 7 p.m.

GOOD FRIDAY, April 14

Adoration of the Cross at 8:30 a.m., noon and 7 p.m.

Hillert setting of the St. John Passion at noon

EASTER VIGIL, April 15, 7 p.m.

Old Testament readings, Romans 6:3-11, John 20:1-18

RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD, April 16

Holy Communion at 8:30 and 11 a.m.

