

Grace Notes



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH • 7300 W DIVISION • RIVER FOREST IL 60305 • 708-366-6900 • WWW.GRACERIVERFOREST.ORG

May 2018

Tracking crumbs in the mystery of Holy Communion

by Pastor Lauren Wegner

As I tear off a piece of bread and place it into the palm of your hands, I look you in the eyes and say the words we all long to hear each week: “The body of Christ, given for you.” As you drink from the chalice or bring a cup of wine to your lips, you again hear more words for you: “The blood of Christ, shed for you.” Holy Communion is at once communal—we all receive the same bread and wine, and deeply personal—we each receive our very own swallow, our very own portion.

As I tear off pieces of bread to place into palms, crumbs inevitably stick to my fingers. And I love those crumbs, because I track them across the foreheads of babies and young children as I offer a blessing for them, marking them with the sign of the cross. I like to think that these young ones are still receiving the body and blood of Christ, just in a different way. The tiniest of crumbs are left on their heads and in their hair, and they are sent out into the world, just as older children and adults are, filled with the mercy and forgiveness of Jesus Christ.

On Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, fourth-grade children in our congregation received the sacrament of Holy Communion, many for the first time. A few weeks earlier they had participated in a Communion Instruction Retreat, where they explored the historical and theological truths of this sacrament. It’s important for all of us to spend time learning about the sacrament, but while knowledge deepens our experience of the sacrament, it is



certainly not required to receive the gift of Holy Communion. Preparation for communion begins at the font in baptism, when we are received as God’s children and sealed in God’s gracious love. In baptism, we receive the faith that sustains and nurtures us throughout our lives. This faith is what brings us to the Meal; this faith is what moves our hearts and our feet towards the Table.

Lutherans understand Holy Communion as a holy mystery, and one that we will never truly grasp on this side of heaven (and perhaps not even then). Therefore we invite and welcome all the

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Communion crumbs

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baptized to the Table, since all that is expected of those who commune is trust in God's presence and promise. If your child is younger than fourth grade and shows an interest in Holy Communion, consider beginning a conversation with one of us pastors about your child receiving the bread and wine. We love these kinds of conversations, and we would welcome the opportunity to speak with you and your child about the gift of Holy Communion in an age-appropriate way. Regardless of when your child begins to receive Communion, he or she will be invited to participate in the Communion Instruction Retreat as a fourth grader.

Recently in worship, one of Grace's little ones walked up to the chalice bearer during Communion and indicated to her that he wanted to see what was inside. Before we knew it, he dunked his chubby toddler hand into the chalice of wine and even splashed in it a little before he was scooped up by his father. Later, I heard from the child's mother that the little boy had been splashing in the font prior to worship and he perceived the chalice as a small font in which to splash. What a beautiful image! Baptism always leads us to the Table, for the two are inextricably connected.

As I put away the basket of bread after sharing in the Lord's Supper with you, I still feel the crumbs on my fingers. I rub them onto my hands, and wipe them gently on my alb. I wear them, and their presence sticks with me—much like Jesus does.

May the body and blood of Christ always strengthen you and forever keep you in his grace.

In Christ,
+Pastor Lauren



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, April 27, with the hope that it will arrive in your mailbox no later than May 5. Copies are also available at Grace.

Deadlines and submissions. The June-July issue of Grace Notes will be mailed on Friday, May 25. The deadline for copy is Wednesday, May 16; the issue covers events through early August. 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.

Congregation meeting on June 3

There will be a regular meeting of the congregation on Sunday, June 3, at 12:15 p.m. The agenda includes the approval of the budget for the 2018-19 fiscal year.

WORSHIP

Sunday, May 6

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

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

Acts 10:44-48, Psalm 98, 1 John 5:1-6, John 15:9-17

Sunday, May 13

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

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

Acts 1:15-17, 21-26; Psalm 1, 1 John 5:9-13, John 17:6-19

Sunday, May 20

DAY OF PENTECOST

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

Acts 2:1-21, Psalm 104:24-34, 35b; Romans 8:22-27, John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

Sunday, May 27

THE HOLY TRINITY

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

Isaiah 6:1-8, Psalm 29, Romans 8:12-17, John 3:1-17

May 20, 3:45 p.m.

BACH CANTATA VESPERS

Also hat Gott die Welt geliebt, BWV 68

For God so loved the world

Prelude: Joseph J. Raff, *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*, Op. 127

Homilist: Bruce K. Modahl, Fernandina Beach, Fla.

Preview lecture: Mark P. Bangert, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Sunday, May 6, is Confirmation Sunday

Witness Services at 3 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. on May 5

Twenty-three eighth graders will renew their baptismal vows in the rite of confirmation on Sunday, May 6, during the 11 a.m. worship service. The confirmands will talk about their faith during two witness services on Saturday, May 5, at 3 and 5:30 p.m. (The later service accommodates scheduling challenges in our confirmands' busy lives.) There will be a reception after the 3 p.m. service for all of the students.

These young people have spent two years preparing for confirmation and have been working on the content, the writing and the delivery of their witness statements since shortly after Christmas. They are asked to choose a focus verse from the Bible and use it to explore their personal faith in the context of their lives. Each has a unique story to share. Come to one of the services (or to both) on May 5 and hear them!

Bach cantata for Pentecost on May 20 is based on John 3:16

The final cantata service for the 2017-18 Bach Cantata Vespers season takes place on Pentecost Sunday, May 20. The cantata for the service is *Also hat Gott die Welt geliebt* (For God so loved the world, BWV 68).

In celebration of the 500th anniversary year of the Reformation, this season's cantatas have been works that Bach based on Lutheran chorales. This first chorus of this cantata, composed for Pentecost Monday in 1725, uses a hymn paraphrase of John 3:16 in the opening chorus. In place of the usual straightforward chorale setting, the cantata ends with a rather stern double fugue on the text of John 3:18, "Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God." The most familiar movement of the cantata, however, is the joyful soprano aria known in English as "My heart ever faithful."

The instrumental prelude at 3:45 is an overture on "A Mighty Fortress" by the 19th century Swiss-German composer Joseph Joachim Raff, a colleague of Liszt and Clara Schumann. Mark Bangert previews the cantata with a lecture in the Seminar Room at 3 p.m.

Grace's retired Senior Pastor Bruce Modahl is the homilist. Read more about what he's been doing on page 9.





ADULT EDUCATION

Adult Education classes meet at 9:45 a.m. on Sunday mornings at Grace.

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

May 13

A Christian's Retrospective

Pastor Hans Dumpys

Uprooted from his family's historic homestead in western Lithuania by the advancing Russian threat, Hans Dumpys and his family became refugees experiencing the many severe dangers of war. Having been saved from the traumas of war and emigrating to America, he wonders why he survived and what his life's response might be. He gradually came to believe that he was spared to be a witness to the One who saved his life.

SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY

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

May 20

Vaccines and Society

Laura Merwin, Assistant Professor of Biology, Concordia University Chicago

Although vaccines have saved millions of lives in the last 200 years, from their introduction they have provoked controversy and opposition. Within the context of historical and current anti-vaccination movements, this session will reframe the vaccine debate by discussing the idea of immunity as a social phenomenon. The choice to vaccinate not only confers protection to the individual, but is also a way to help protect the most vulnerable members of our local and global communities.

West Cook YMCA Fitness Assessment and Healthy Living Information Session

Learn more about a new partnership between the West Cook YMCA and Grace Church, focused on healthy aging. Hear more about an opportunity for older adults at Grace to receive fitness assessments and healthy living guidance.

Books about nature in the church library

An anonymous poet shared these thoughts:

As daffodils and crocuses wake from the sleep of winter,
As fruit blossoms mark the dawn of spring,
We join all creation to praise God for the miracle of life
and the splendor of new life in Christ.

Here are some titles about nature in the church library. Find these books and other displayed in the church library and in the cabinet in the atrium.

Birds of the Bible, by Gene Stratton Porter. Ameron, Eaton & Mains, Mattituck, NY, 1992. [220.8 STR]

In the Beginning: Creation, Culture and the Spiritual Life, by Marva Dawn. IVP Books, 2009. [222 DAW]

Of Earth and Sky: Spiritual Lessons from Nature, by Thomas Becknell. Augsburg Fortress, 2002. [242 BEC] An anthology of classic and contemporary writings on nature.

Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants, by Douglas W. Tallamy. Timber Press, 2015. [639.9 TAL]

A Timbered Choir: The Sabbath Poems, 1979-1997, by Wendell Berry. Counterpoint, 1998. [811 BER] Poetry inspired by the author's Sunday morning walks and meditations.

Not for children only –

The Creation: The Story of How God Created the World, by Sheila Cassidy. Crossroad, 1996. [E 233 CAS]

All Things Bright and Beautiful, by Cecil Frances Alexander. Morehouse, 2000. [E 264 ALE] Illustrated version of the hymn which describes the marvels of God's creation.

Whispering Verses: Nature Poems for Young Children, by Michael J. Meyer. Cookie Books, 1997. [E 808 MEY] Poems for children by a sainted member of Grace.

In the Beginning There Was No Sky: A Story of Creation, by Walter Wangerin Jr. T Nelson, 1986. [J 231WAN]

The Grace Church Library is open and staffed on Sundays from 8:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Look for books related to Adult Ed topics as well as many other subjects. The library is also open for self-service during the week.

Enjoy Grace hospitality as we dedicate the new kitchen

The Bible tells us to practice hospitality, a directive that has long been answered, at least in part, by church suppers. This is as true at Grace as it is at other Lutheran churches in the American midwest—each with its own ways of bringing people together for meals and fellowship. At Grace the tradition includes taking special care:

“I am reminded of my first Grace event,” says Grace member and frequent cook Jeff Cribbs, “a meal prepared with extraordinary care by Maxine Christopher and her team. It was great food, carefully prepared and presented, and honored everyone present. What is interesting is she had the same level of concern and respect preparing holiday meals for the homeless at Uptown ministry.”

This care and concern for all who come to meals cooked and served at Grace continues to this day, from Cornerstones lunches, Grace School celebrations, and Lenten suppers to the special hospitality offered to mourners at funeral luncheons. The central role of food — good food! — in Grace gatherings inspired the recent kitchen renovation and the installation of the new coffee

bar and beverage service area at the north end of Fellowship Hall.

The kitchen was put to use even as the work was being completed. Still in the works are plans for a special event to dedicate the kitchen, thank representatives of the Christopher Family Foundation for the gift that made the renovation possible, and celebrate with special food and fellowship. So save the date: Saturday, June 16, beginning at 4 p.m. There will be music, a brief program in the sanctuary, and then food to celebrate—food from Grace’s many talented cooks, offered in honor of everyone present and shared to the glory of God!

**Save the date!
Saturday, June 16
4:00 p.m.**

**Dedication and
celebration of the
new kitchen and
Fellowship Hall
coffee bar**

What was once the “Men’s Room” is now meeting space

“Immediately above the Ladies Parlor a very serviceable mezzanine has been arranged for, which will serve as a Men’s Room. Here the voting members of the congregation will hold their monthly meetings; here Bible Classes will meet on Sundays; and here many of the larger committees will attend to their respective tasks.”

Dedication booklet, Grace Church, February 8, 1931

Can you guess where the “Men’s Room” described in the dedication booklet was located? Here’s a hint: the “Ladies’ Parlor” has become the church library. To find the room immediately above it, go up the tall flight of stairs outside the sanctuary door on the pulpit side. At the first landing you’ll see double doors and inside, a large open space with a fireplace on the west wall. Until recently the room served as an office for Lyle Mortensen, who retired in August, as well as storage space for computer equipment. One corner of the room is still set aside as a control room for Grace’s church video system, but the rest of it is now available as a meeting space.

It has been named the “1902 Room” in honor of the year in which Grace Church was founded. The 1930s conference table which used to sit outside the business office on Grace’s lower level was recently hauled up the stairs (in two pieces) by a crew of men on the church staff, along with the matching leather chairs. Grace’s building staff has completed repairs to the plaster and paint, and the room is now available for meetings. The table will accommodate 8 to 10 people comfortably, with additional chairs available.



Plans are being made to add upholstered seating, side tables, art work and new lighting to the space. When finished the room will have a vintage feeling to go along with its name. Doors from the 1902 Room lead to the church’s archive, where books, papers and photos from Grace’s history are stored.

You’re welcome to visit the 1902 Room any time the building is open and to schedule meetings or other gatherings there. Keep in mind that it is not a suitable space for every group at Grace, since it cannot be reached without climbing stairs. (No one thought about accessibility back in the 1930s.) Nevertheless, the 1902 Room is a much-needed addition to meeting space at Grace Church—and one that’s no longer for men only!

Bring a smile to the face of another Grace member with a greeting card sent by Operation Deluge

by **Anne-Marie Bogdan**

“What is Operation Deluge?” This is a question often asked when Operation Deluge has a table in Grace’s atrium on a Sunday morning between services.

Operation Deluge is a Grace ministry started by the late Mike Meyer—a Grace member—about 12 years ago as a way to send encouragement and greetings to those with chronic or acute illness, or who are recovering from illness, or otherwise are having difficulties. The ministry has recently been expanded to include those who have lost a loved one.

Mike began Operation Deluge in 2006 and hosted it once a month, always offering his famous banana bread. He continued hosting it until shortly before his death in 2011. After Mike died, Sandy Rollheiser took on Operation Deluge until she needed to step down, and then Carole Hoyem succeeded Sandy. Anne-Marie Bogdan has since joined Carole as an additional host. Operation Deluge happens about every six weeks.

Here’s how it works: you can stop by the Operation Deluge table in the atrium, where there are cards and envelopes and labels available. Some of the cards are blank on the inside, but most say something inside them that might be helpful in starting a greeting. All you need do is write a brief note to the chosen recipient for that time—some folks just sign their name—and seal the card in the envelope. Then you can affix a peel-and-stick label with the recipient’s address on it—labels are provided by Karen Christopher, the church secretary. That’s it! And if you can’t think of anything to say at the moment, take a card and a label and send it later. No need to find a card in the store or look up the address. Simple.

And you don’t even need to know the recipients personally. The point is to let them know we’re thinking of and praying for them.

How are the recipients chosen? The Operation Deluge host asks the pastors for a recommendation the week before hosting. The person chosen is usually from the Grace prayer list.

Where do the cards come from? They are donated by congregation members, and some are handmade by Anne-Marie. Donated cards that can’t be used by Operation Deluge (e.g., birthday or Christmas cards) are taken to the Bronco Shop for resale to raise funds for Walther Christian Academy.

Who pays the postage? Grace Church provides the postage for the signed cards, so donations of postage—either the stamps themselves or money toward the expense—are always welcome.

Anne-Marie remembers, “I was once the recipient of Operation Deluge when I was in the hospital. It was wonderful to get about 30 cards at once, some from Grace members and kids I didn’t even know, letting me know that I was being prayed for, reminding me that we are all the family of God. It was like being hugged, and it lifted my spirits and brought a big smile.”

Please join in this Grace ministry: watch for the table in the atrium, write a message, donate some cards or postage, and provide a smile for a Grace member.

Singles Socrates Café debuts May 27

Singles of all ages at Grace are welcome to join us as we gather around food, fun, and thoughtful conversation. This is the first of what we hope will be many Singles Socrates Cafés at Grace so watch for more opportunities to come.

When? Sunday, May 27, after the 11 a.m. service (12:15-ish) in Fellowship Hall (by the coffee service end). Lunch will be provided. We are asking a \$10 donation to cover the costs of food. Beverages are BYOB so bring something to share.

What is a Socrates Café? A Socrates Café is simply a gathering of people for the sole purpose of inquiry and discussion. These cafés are geared toward inquiry and discussion that lead to the surprising, the novel, the unfamiliar — that open portals to new possibilities to who we might be as individuals and as a community. Our inquiries are based on the premise that

people of all ages and walks of life count and that those often left out tend to be the most uncommonly perceptive, when given the opportunity. Most importantly, these inquiries include and value the wisdom of every member of the group.

Why a Socrates Café? In looking for a way to get singles of Grace together, it was thought this might be a fun way to meet, get to know each other, share, and start meaningful and fun conversation.

Please RSVP by May 24. To make sure we have enough food, please RSVP to Julie Hinz (juliehinz414@gmail.com) or 708-502-5429 or to Diane Moses at (mosespar2@aol.com) or 708-613-5402.

Come join this new ministry for fun, food, open conversation and see what the future might bring for the Singles of Grace.

Socrates Cafe

Resisting racism comes with a cost



A CONVERSATION ON RACISM

By the time this article finds folks' eyes in Grace Notes, we'll be near the Sixth

Sunday of Easter (this year, on May 6). The gospel reading for that day will be John 15:9-17, a passage laden with the lush gifts of life with Jesus and in Jesus. Love and joy; friendship with God,

fruitfulness for God. Such full-on bounty!

"As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. (John 15:9-11)

But, wait. There's a kicker in there, amid the copious gifts—a trace of...holy adversity:

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. (John 15:12-13)

There is a cost. A profound cost, even while tasting the love, channeling the joy, bearing the fruit of Jesus. For Lutherans, often so quick to use the language of the cross, it probably ought to come as no surprise. And yet...how will we let that word sink in—all the way in—beyond a pious nod, or some nifty, reductive interpretation? "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."

DeRay Mckesson, a crisp and compelling voice of the Black Lives Matter movement, was one of the principal speakers at a potent gathering on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., last month. This gathering, A.C.T. to End Racism, was sponsored by a consortium of faith-based organizations, including the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, The National African American Clergy Network, Sojourners, Bread for the World and others, in the first week of April, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s murder by gunshot in Memphis. The ELCA was well represented. I was glad—even wearing four coats on a chilly spring day—to be attending as a member of Grace's Faith Perspectives team.

Mckesson, a former teacher and school administrator, recalled a story about students in his sixth-grade math class. One day, they eagerly asked to leave his class so they could go to gym early, but then returned to his classroom after just five minutes. "I realized that they were more in love with the idea of gym than with the work of gym,"

Mckesson said. "And it makes me think that many

people are more in love with the idea of resistance than the work of resistance." Our richly diverse assembly, shivering on the Mall in 30-degree wind chills, rippled with laughter—and recognition.

As Grace's conversations on race and racism continued in April with showings and discussions of the film "A Time For Burning," the 40 participants were brought face-to-face with the persistent chasm between image and reality, between the idea of reconciliation and repair, and the work of reconciliation and repair. The 1966 documentary explores the attempts of the pastor of a church in Omaha, Nebraska, to persuade his all-white congregation to reach out to black Lutherans in a church just a few blocks away—attempts that were ultimately unsuccessful.

Real laying down of our lives—of still-tenacious assumptions and much-cherished practices in our congregations, of baked-in social and economic advantage that produce scandalous disparities in education and housing in our cities—is hard to accept, and even harder to address.

In May Faith Perspectives is hosting two more film-discussion sessions in which we'll listen to the American novelist and social critic James Baldwin in the acclaimed, Oscar-nominated documentary "I Am Not Your Negro." The film uses live interviews interspersed with historical reflections on the civil rights movement to present a challenging, uncompromising, and intensely personal manifesto from this brilliant. As Pastor Sherman Hicks, our guest moderator and whole-hearted mentor for this film series, urges, "If you have any interest in learning why some African Americans feel the way they feel and act the way they do when it comes to race relations, this documentary is for you!"

Indeed, Baldwin may prompt us, provoke us, to lay some ideas, some images, some certainties down. Maybe, even, our lives.

Bill Bixby

for the Faith Perspectives Committee

"I Am Not Your Negro"

Sunday, May 13, 2:30–4 p.m., Fellowship Hall

Wednesday, May 16, 7–8:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall

Based on archival material and James Baldwin's notes on the lives and assassinations of Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King Jr., the film explores the racial narrative in America, connecting the past of the Civil Rights movement to the present of #BlackLivesMatter.

Summer and Fall 2018

Look for a list of additional resources – podcasts, books and articles, web resources — for continued learning and discussion through the summer.

Conversations with Harmony. Faith Perspectives is planning a series of conversations with our neighbors from Harmony Community Church next fall.

Spiritual and physical fitness meet in Christ Walk

This summer's walking program, sponsored by Grace's Health Cabinet, will use a fitness program called "Christ Walk." It will run from Thursday, June 21, through Monday, July 30.

A registered nurse, Anna Fitch Courie, started Christ Walk in her local Episcopal congregation. The book that resulted, "Christ Walk: A 40-Day Spiritual Fitness Program," includes several 40-day journeys:

- **The Nazareth Challenge** is 60 miles between Jesus' hometown and Jerusalem – about 1.6 miles of walking each day.
- **The Jerusalem to Damascus Route** represents the apostle Paul's conversion story with about 3.75 miles per day.
- **The Jerusalem Challenge** follows Jesus' route through his final days with 2.2 miles of walking per day.
- **The Damascus to Caesarea** journey is 5 miles per day.
- **The Exodus Challenge**, the most ambitious challenge, covers the route Jews walked to the Promised Land with 9.4 miles a day of walking.

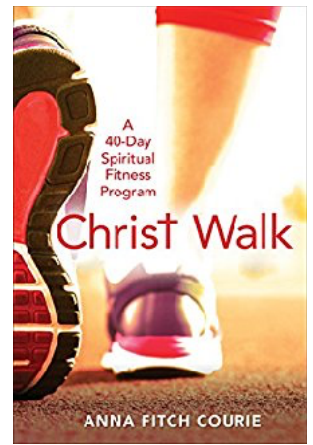
Courie's book is designed so that each day you read one chapter and record your steps/distance. There's a chart to help you convert different fitness activities (walk, bike, run, swim, dance) to miles. There's also a place to record your feelings and spiritual thoughts for the day.

Young people are welcome to sign up for the fitness program, too. There's a special edition of the program for them, called "Christ Walk Kids: A 40-Day Spiritual Journey for Tweens and Teens."

When you sign up for Grace's summer walking program, you decide which route you want to follow to meet your fitness goals. The route you choose determines what team you are on. We hope that the individuals on each team will connect with one another, share their Christ Walk experiences, and deepen their understanding of a life of walking with Christ.

Please sign up for the summer walking and fitness program at the reception desk, or email Sue Ames (sames@gracriverforest.org) by June 21.

You can order a copy of the book when you sign up and pick it up at the Health Cabinet table in the atrium on Sunday, June 17. The cost is \$13. Or order a copy of the book on your own. It's available at Amazon.



Parish Nurse news

Fitness and healthy aging

Don't forget to sign-up at the reception desk for your fitness evaluation provided by the West Cook YMCA as part of the healthy aging program. Assessments will take place in the church library on May 14, 1–4 p.m., and June 4 and 28, 9 a.m.–noon.

Come to the Adult Ed session, between services on Sunday, May 20, to learn more. Contact Sue Ames (sames@gracriverforest.org) with questions.

Our parish nurse, Sue Ames, has been caring for her ailing mother over the last few months. To give Sue the flexibility to navigate this journey with her family, effective April 16, she has transitioned from a part-time to an hourly staff member.

The most noticeable change is that Sue will no longer hold scheduled office hours during the week. She will continue to interface with the Health Cabinet Ministry, support the pastoral/parish nurse care needs of the congregation, and nurture relationships with external organizations that work with Grace in the areas of health and wellness.

Financial update

Grace Lutheran Church General Fund

Church budgeted contributions

July 1–April 22, 2018 \$ 1,634,000
(\$38,000 per week)

Church actual contributions

July 1–April 22, 2018 \$ 1,571,000
(Last year at this time, \$ 1,393,000)

Church giving is now \$63,000 below budget and \$178,000 ahead of last year at this time. We continue to run a small deficit of \$32,000 with 9 weeks left in the fiscal year.

Pastor Modahl will preach at the cantata service in May

Pastor Bruce Modahl, Grace's Senior Pastor from 1998 to 2014, will return to Grace Church's pulpit on Sunday, May 20, when he preaches at the afternoon Bach Cantata Vespers service. (The instrumental prelude begins at 3:45 p.m. Pastor Modahl and his wife, Jackie, will be at church that Sunday morning as well and at the retirement luncheon for Paulette Reddel.

Grace Notes Editor Gwen Gotsch interviewed Pastor Modahl via email about what he's been doing since retiring from ministry at Grace Church in August of 2014.

So how's Florida? And retirement in general? We love Amelia Island. We honeymooned here in 1976 and have been coming back for vacations ever since. We see the ocean from our back porch. I love having the time to read. After 40 years Jackie goes off to church council meetings and I stay home to do the dishes.

You've traded in snowstorms for hurricanes. Discuss. We were smug about northeast Florida being out of the path of hurricanes. Then two years in a row we had mandatory evacuations. We are not among those tempted to stay. We pack up, lock up, hit the back roads to avoid the traffic jams, and head north and west. We had only minor damage.

Where are you and Jackie worshipping these days? Prince of Peace, the only Lutheran church in our county is a mile away. Our pastor is Ida Iverson from Minnesota.

How's the back pain? My back still hurts but with a pain management implant I received in November 2017 I'm doing much better. Last fall Jackie had sixth and seventh surgeries on her right ankle. She is recovering.

Preaching? Writing? Thinking? What is God calling you to do?

I presided at worship and preached three times during Lent. I write sermon studies for an online site. I write and edit the newsletter for The Crossings Community. I have a longer writing project in the works. God is calling me to be content.

I hear there's a grandchild on the way. Our son, Martin, and his wife, Lauren, are expecting their first child and our first grandchild in late June, early July. They live in Bucktown and belong to Holy Trinity Lutheran in Wrigleyville.

What is your daughter, Rachel, up to these days? Rachel is a film editor with Disney Studios. She and her husband, Adam, live in Santa Monica, California. She censors everything we watch.

Read any good books lately? The best theology I have read recently is "A Theology in Outline: Can These Bones Live?" by



On the Sunday after Easter, April 8, Pastor Modahl and his wife, Jackie, visited Grace for the first time since they moved to Florida in 2014. Their visit prompted this photo of Grace pastors and cantors. Clockwise from center front: Paul Bouman, Director of Music at Grace, 1953–83; Dave Wegner, Associate Pastor since 2016; Bob Shaner, Interim Pastor, 2014–15; Dean Lueking, Senior Pastor, 1963–98; Michael Costello, Cantor since 2008; Dave Lyle, Senior Pastor since 2015; Bruce Modahl, Senior Pastor, 1998–2014; Lauren Wegner, Associate Pastor since 2016; Phyllis Kersten (center), Associate Pastor, 1996–2008, Interim Associate Pastor, 2015–16.

Robert Jenson. It is his most accessible book by far. I have been reading James McBride's books. I recommend "The Good Lord Bird."

Do you miss us? We miss you terribly. I miss watching the children grow, knowing where they are going to school now, and what their hopes and dreams are. We were back to visit the Sunday after Easter. It was hard to hold back the tears during worship; it is so incredibly beautiful. Dostoevsky said beauty will save the world.

Church / School food drive in May

The Social Ministry Committee and Grace School are working together on a food drive in May. A collection bin will be available in the atrium on Sunday, May 13 through Sunday, May 20.

GRACE NEWS

SANDWICH-MAKING AT FRATERNITÉ. Grace members will be packing lunches at Fraternité Notre Dame, 502 N. Central, on Monday, May 21, at 7 p.m. Contact Kate Hogenson to arrange a ride.

KNITTING/CROCHETING GROUP meets on Tuesday, May 15, at 1 p.m. in the church library.

LECTIO DIVINA meets on Monday, May 21, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. in the church library. Contact MaryBeth Buschmann for more information (marybeth1942@sbcglobal.net).

RETIRED LEADERS AND OTHERS meet on Tuesday, May 8, 10 a.m., in the church library. Richard Woods will present “A Roman Catholic appraisal of Luther and the Lutheran Reformation.” Guests are welcome.

GRACE NOTES MAILING CREW will be at work on the June newsletter on Thursday, May 24, at 9:30 a.m. They welcome more helpers.

CORNERSTONES BIBLE STUDY. Come for treats and conversation at 10 a.m. on Wednesdays, followed by Bible study at 10:30. Cornerstones meets weekly through May 23. There is Morning Prayer at 11:30 a.m. on May 16, followed by lunch, and a Hymn Sing on May 23.

FINDING HOPE, the chronic illness support group, meets at Grace at 7:15 p.m. on Tuesday, May 1.

RELIGION IN LITERATURE. The book discussion group meets on Friday, May 18, at 8 p.m. Amy Claud leads a discussion of “The Handmaid’s Tale” by Margaret Atwood. Ken and Robin Cozette are the hosts.

YOGA, led by Ackli Howell, meets at Grace on Thursday evenings at 6:30 p.m., through May 24. Bring a yoga mat and a blanket or beach towel. Dress for movement.

MOMS OF LITTLES

The new Moms of Littles group continues to meet every other Wednesday, with meetings scheduled for May 2 and 16, 6:30-8 p.m. in the Youth Room. Child care will be available in the nursery. If you're a mom of young ones, we invite you to gather with other moms to reflect, share, and connect with open and informal discussion guided by the book *Grace Based Parenting*, by Tim Kimmel. You do not need to read the book to participate in the discussion.)

WOMEN @ GRACE AT KINSLAHGER

Join Women@Grace on Monday, May 7, 6:30-9 p.m., for an evening at Kinslahger Brewing Company’s Taproom, 6806 Roosevelt Road in Oak Park. Enjoy Kinslahger’s flagship beers, appetizers and desserts. Your free will donation benefits Harmony Community Church’s tutoring program. All are welcome! Sign up at the front desk.

PRAYERS

WE PRAY for those who mourn the deaths of Mike McDonnell, husband of Judie and father of Allison Terry.

WE PRAY for those who mourn the death of former Grace member Bill Clover.

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.

NEW MEMBERS

The following people were received into membership at Grace Church on April 15: John Cusack, Sarah Gruendler-Ladner, Linda and Robert Street, Alexia Wendel, Josh and Julia Wood.

ALTAR FLOWERS

Donate flowers to remember a loved one or commemorate a special birthday or anniversary. Look for the sign-up sheet at the reception desk in the atrium.

May 13 — In loving memory always of Margo Bonebrake and Marjorie Keene, from their children and grandchildren with love.

May 20 — In memory of the Rev. Don Becker from Carolyn Becker and family.

BUILDING CLOSED

Grace will be closed on Monday, May 28, for the Memorial Day holiday.

EMERGENCY PHONE

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. (Consider storing this number in the contacts on your cell phone.)

Church and School communities celebrate the ministry of Paulette Reddel on May 20



Paulette Reddel confers with a member of the 1st-2nd grade choir during the Sunday worship service on Sunday, November 5, 2017. Paulette teaches music to 1st and 2nd graders, as well as being the first grade classroom teacher.

Paulette Reddel is retiring at the end of the school year, after 28 years as Grace School's first grade teacher. Come to the lunch after the 11 a.m. worship service on May 20 to help her celebrate with her husband, Stan, and the rest of her family. There will be guest speakers and fun memories from Paulette's students and from her years serving the Grace congregation in other areas, including on the New Members Committee.

- **RSVP for the lunch.** Sign up for the lunch online by clicking on the link at GraceRiverForest.org by Wednesday evening, May 16. Or sign up at the reception desk.
- **Write a note.** You'll have the opportunity to write a note of thanks or congratulations at the lunch. If you're unable to be there, or wish to write something ahead of time, please email your message to office@gracriverforest.org, or bring the note to Eileen Maggio at the school office.
- **Gift.** To contribute to a gift for Paulette, write a check to Grace Church with "Reddel Retirement" on the memo line. Checks may be placed in the offering plate or dropped at the reception desk. To contribute online use the line marked "Other" and type "Reddel Retirement" in the box to the right.

School News

Finian's Rainbow. Grace School's seventh and eighth grade classes will present "Finian's Rainbow Jr." on Friday, May 18, at 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. The show, originally produced in 1947, includes tunes such as "How Are Things in Glocca Morra?" "Old Devil Moon," and "Look to the Rainbow." There'll be lots of singing and dancing, even some mild satire. Plus — a leprechaun! Donation at the door.

Staff openings in fourth grade and preschool. Grace School is now looking for a full-time fourth-grade teacher and a part-time preschool teacher for 2018-19. More information is available on the Grace website. GraceRiverForest.org.

School musicians win honors. Grace School eighth-graders Isabella Rossi (violin) and Sebastian Lira (piano) and a choir of 8th-grade girls made it into the "Best of the Best" final concert at the annual Fine Arts Festival at Trinity,



Register now for Vacation Bible School

June 11-15, 8:30-12 p.m.
For children age 3 through current 5th graders
Register at GraceRiverForest.org

YOUTH MINISTRY RUMMAGE SALE



FRIDAY, JUNE 8
9am–6pm

SATURDAY, JUNE 9
8am–1pm

Proceeds from the sale support
Grace teens and adults traveling
to Houston in July for the
ELCA Youth Gathering.

BOXED/BAGGED DONATIONS TO THE ATRIUM

May 26–June 1 (*Building is closed Memorial Day*)

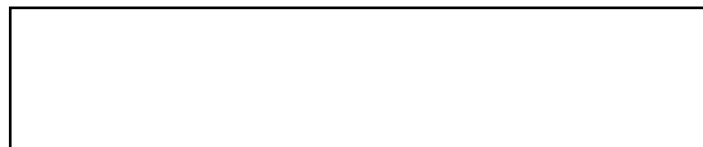
LARGE ITEMS/BOXED/BAGGED DONATIONS TO THE GYM

Saturday, June 2, 8am–1pm; Sunday, June 3, 2–5pm

Monday–Wednesday, June 4–6 9am–8pm

LARGE ITEM PICK-UP

Saturday, June 2 (Sign up at graceriverforest.org. Click on Resources > Church News)



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