

Grace Notes

October 2019

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



God's not finished yet ...

by Pastor Dave Lyle

One of the most rewarding aspects of being a pastor at Grace is teaching in our school. Specifically, the pastoral team shares the responsibility of teaching the 7th grade religion class. Currently, I'm spending time teaching about the various covenants God made with God's people in the Old Testament. After various false starts, God tries something new with Abram and Sarai, two faithful doubters who would become the patriarch and matriarch of a new people, Israel.

Our classroom lesson began with a discussion of this saying: "Please be patient, God isn't finished with me yet." It didn't take much time in Genesis for the students to see how this saying

In a world that often demands perfection, these students know that they are works in progress. And they know God isn't done with them yet.

applied to the renamed Abraham and Sarah. They questioned and doubted God's plan time after time, but they also kept believing that God was doing something in their lives. It took even less time for these students to see how the saying applied to them. In a world that often demands perfection, they know that they are works in progress. And they know God isn't done with them yet.

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What is God working on in your life?

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What is God working on in your life? How is God moving in and through the unfinished narratives of your everyday life? At the end of October, we celebrate Reformation Sunday. In part, this is a chance to celebrate our Lutheran heritage. This is a heritage, however, that is devoid of meaning if it is not lived in a present that looks to the future. The great insight of the Lutheran Reformation is a radical reorientation to Jesus Christ and his cross which, by grace through faith, are sufficient for us. Such faith is always a work in progress for us, but God isn't done with us yet.

This month is also the time of the year when we make our Faith Promises, indications of our financial support to Grace and its many ministries. Most of us are still growing in generosity. We're not there yet. I hope and pray that you will prayerfully consider increasing your regular giving to support our church and school. God is doing great things in and through Grace, and God isn't done yet.

In light of our current financial challenges, the Grace Council has appointed a Strategic Financial Task Force, co-chaired by

Melissa DeVries and Rich Schubkegel, to develop short- and mid-term strategies to improve our financial situation while also remaining fully committed to our mission. This is important work, and just beginning, but God isn't done yet.

At Grace, as always, there is much for which to be thankful, and much work for us to do. We're not done yet, and God's not done with us yet. In the joyful paradox of faith, however, we do this work from the vantage point of the story's end. As St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" There is much to do, but the goal has been reached. We are new creations in Christ, and this cannot be undone.

Let us therefore continue the work of reforming; let us continue to grow in generosity; let us deepen our mission. May we do so with the faith of a seventh grader, knowing that God is at work and that it's okay that we are works in progress. God's not done yet!

GriefShare programs come to Grace

GriefShare Leadership Training. Have you experienced the deep grief of losing a loved one to death? Have you learned valuable lessons and experienced healing from the hurt? Would you like to help others do the same? In January 2020 Grace will begin our first GriefShare program. GriefShare is a 13 week seminar/support group for individuals who are grieving the death of a loved one.

We are currently looking for individuals to be part of our leadership team. A leadership training workshop will be held on Saturday, November 2, 2019, from 9 a.m. to noon in the church library. If you are interested in working with our GriefShare ministry, please contact Pastor Dave Wegner (dwegner@graceriverforest.org) or Linda Bernard (lm_bernard_@hotmail.com) to learn more about volunteer opportunities.

"Surviving the Holidays" seminar Sunday, November 17, 12:30–3 p.m.

Grace's new GriefShare ministry is sponsoring a "Surviving the Holidays" workshop on Sunday, November 17, 12:30–3 p.m., in the church library. A light lunch will be served prior to the workshop. Please sign up for the workshop at the Grace reception desk by November 10.

Grieving?

Know someone who is?



When you are grieving a loved one's death, the holiday season can be especially painful. Our **Surviving the Holidays** seminar helps participants prepare for the holidays and even discover hope for the future.

**SURVIVING
THE
HOLIDAYS**

GRIEF SHARE®

www.griefshare.org/holidays

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, September 27, with the hope that it will arrive in your mailbox no later than October 4. Copies are also available at Grace.

Deadlines and submissions. The November issue of Grace Notes will be mailed on Friday, November 1. The deadline for copy is Wednesday, October 23; the issue covers events through the end of November. Send news to ggotsch@graceriverforest.org. Please limit 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.

October 20 is Faith Promise Sunday

From the Stewardship Committee

Grace members are invited annually to make a pledge of financial commitment to the mission and ministry at Grace. These pledges are made in the fall, on Faith Promise Sunday, which this year is October 20.

Whether or not you have submitted a Faith Promise Card in the past, please prayerfully consider making a pledge this year. Our offerings support our congregation's life and ministry together. Our Spirit-led, sacrificial offerings are an act of worship, an expression of faith and an opportunity to grow into a closer, more joyful relationship with God.

We hope this year to increase the percentage of households in our congregation that make a Faith Promise. We would also encourage you to consider setting up automated giving through your bank or through Grace's online donation page as a way to faithfully and conveniently fulfill your pledge.

Grace Church members will receive a Faith Promise card in the mail at the beginning of October to use in making their commitment. You may place the card in the offering plate on Sunday, October 20 (or a later Sunday). The mailing also includes a Time and Talent Card that lists the many ways you



Give thanks
to the Lord

— Psalm 118:1

can be involved here at Grace. The Grace community is blessed to have an abundance of volunteer opportunities and we hope this resource will help you explore how best you might serve our church and community.

We are grateful for your faithful partnership in God's ministry to share the good news of Christ's love with each other and our neighbors.

The Stewardship Committee

Alice Bruening, Candice Hill Buchbinder, Sarah Gruendler-Ladner, Eric Isenberg, Randy Keller, Scott Schwar

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Grace Lutheran Church General Fund

Church budgeted contributions

July 1 – Sept. 25, 2019 \$ 490,000
(12 Sundays, \$40,800 per week)

Church actual contributions

July 1 – Sept. 25, 2019 \$ 305,000
(Last year at this time: \$289,000)

Church giving is \$185,000 below budget and \$16,000 ahead of last year. The deficit as of Sept. 25 was \$42,000.

2018-19 Year-End Financials

You can still pick up copies of the financial statements for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2019, in the rack next to the atrium elevator. Here are some of the highlights of the financial report that was presented at the congregation meeting on September 8:

- The year ended in a deficit of \$117,000. (We spent more on expenses than we received in revenue.)
 - Good news: Expenses were under budget by \$233,000.
 - Bad news: Revenues were under budget by \$350,000.
Church offerings were \$296,000 under budget and \$117,000 less than last year.
- We borrowed money to make ends meet.
 - We took out a \$150,000 operating loan.
 - We took \$125,000 out of a savings account.
- Council has formed a strategic financial task force to study how to balance the budget in the near term and how to sustain a balanced budget in the long term.

Fall Food Drive

Social Ministry's Fall Food Drive runs from October 13 through October 27. Please bring your donations of non-perishable food items to the bin in the atrium. The food will be shared with clients of Fraternité Notre Dame's food pantry, Beyond Hunger (formerly the Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry), the Forest Park food pantry, and Harmony Community Church's food pantry.

Hope for Grieving Children

The annual fundraiser for Hope for Grieving Children will be hosted at Grace again this fall, with a brunch gathering on Saturday morning, November 16, 9–11 a.m. More information about tickets will be available in a few weeks. If you are interested in supporting the event as a sponsor, please contact Tony Stephens (708-848-4641; tonystephens@sbcglobal.net).

WORSHIP

Sunday, October 6

17TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

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

2 Kings 5:1-3, 7-15c; Psalm 111, 2 Timothy 2:8-15, Luke 17:11-19

Sunday, October 13

18TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

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

Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4; Psalm 37:1-9, 2 Timothy 1:1-14, Luke 17:5-10

Sunday, October 20

19TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

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

Genesis 32:22-31, Psalm 121, 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5, Luke 18:1-8

Sunday, October 27

REFORMATION SUNDAY

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

Jeremiah 31:31-34, Psalm 46, Romans 3:19-28, John 8:31-36

Sunday, November 3

ALL SAINTS SUNDAY

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

Daniel 7:1-3, 15-18; Psalm 149, Ephesians 1:11-23, Luke 6:20-31

Sunday, October 27

BACH CANTATA VESPERS

Höchsterwünschtes Freudenfest, BWV 194

Most highly desired festival of joy

Organ Prelude: Bruce Bengtson, Madison, Wisconsin

Motet: C. Monteverdi's Cantate Domino, SV 293

Homilist: Erin Bouman, Irving Park Lutheran Church, Chicago

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

Guest preacher from Leipzig and the *Thomaskirche*

On Sunday, October 13, we welcome Britta Taddiken, pastor of the *Thomaskirche* in Leipzig, as our guest preacher at both services. Pastor Taddiken is the first woman to be pastor at St. Thomas Church in Leipzig, Germany. St. Thomas is the home of the famous *Thomaner* boys' choir and the final resting place of Johann Sebastian Bach. Most of Bach's cantatas were originally composed for performance at the *Thomaskirche*, which he served as Cantor from 1723–1750. Grace's Bach Cantata Vespers choir has sung in the morning service at St. Thomas several times in summer trips to Germany.

Bach Cantata Vespers on October 27

The October cantata is *Höchsterwünschtes Freudenfest*, BWV 194 (Most highly desired festival of joy), composed for the dedication of a new organ at the church in the small village of Störmthal. The first performance included not only members of Bach's own choir, the all-male Leipzig *Thomanerchor*, but also his wife, Anna Magdalena Bach, as the soprano soloist. The festive cantata was performed again on June 4, 1726, for Trinity Sunday in Leipzig (but this time, without a female soloist).

Organist Bruce Bengtson plays the prelude at 3:45 p.m. on October 27. Erin Bouman, pastor of Irving Park Lutheran Church, is the homilist. The preview lecture by Mark Bangert begins at 3 p.m. in the Seminar Room.

“Come, for all is now ready!”

Altar Guild seeks volunteers

The sacraments of Holy Communion and Holy Baptism bind God's people of Grace and the world's community of Christian faith.

The Grace Church Altar Guild urgently needs volunteers to train and participate in the very essential and meaningful ministry of preparation of these sacraments for the 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Sunday worship services, festival services, weddings, funerals and school communion services. To find out more about Grace's Altar Guild, please contact Roberta Gillespie (708-771-9428) or the church office (708-366-6900).

Be a part of making ready “the gifts of God, for the people of God”

New member class

The fall class for new members begins October 6 and runs through November 24. It's an opportunity to discuss Lutheran theology, learn more about Grace Church, and meet new friends. The class meets on Sunday mornings in Pastor Lyle's office during the Education Hour, 9:45–10:45 a.m. Talk with one of the pastors if you're interested, or contact Karen Christopher in the church office (708-366-6900, ext 207; kchristopher@graceeriverforest.org).



ADULT EDUCATION

Adult Education classes meet at 9:45 a.m. on Sunday mornings in the lower-level Seminar Room. Classes are led by Grace members and guest speakers. If you have suggestions for Adult Ed programming, please contact Ted Anton of the Adult Education Committee (tanton@depaul.edu) or Pastor Dave Wegner (dwegner@graceriverforest.org).

October 6

“The Epic of Creation”

Grace Wolf Chase, Adler Planetarium

Adler Planetarium star formation expert Grace Wolf Chase returns with an update on “The Epic of Creation: The Birth of Star, Planets, and Possibly Life Beyond Earth.” Learn about the births of planets, the prospects for extraterrestrial life, how you can participate in exciting research without going back to school, and how people of faith might think about this amazing universe. Wolf Chase is an Affiliated Faculty member of the Lutheran Zygon Center for Religion and Science, Vice President of the Center for Advanced Studies in Religion and Science, and an advisor for Science for Seminaries, an initiative of the Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Sunday Bible Study

Led by Bob Jandeska, the Bible study group meets on Sunday mornings at 9:45 in the Conference Room on the lower level.

October 20

“The Banality of Grace”

Pastor Bruce Modahl

Bruce Modahl presents from his new book, “The Banality of Grace” (Cascade, 2019), describing the courage of living day to day. From the book jacket: “It is in the daily, the mundane, pedestrian, prosaic, quotidian ... that God shows us our place in God’s momentous story.” Come and consider the beauty in the ordinary with Grace’s former pastor.

October 27 and November 3

“Katharina von Bora and Johannes Bugenhagen”

Kurt Hendel, Bernard, Fischer, Westberg

Distinguished Ministry Professor of Reformation

History at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Reformation scholar Kurt Hendel profiles two individuals who enjoyed close relationships with Martin Luther: his wife, Katharina, and his pastor, Johannes Bugenhagen.

There is no Adult Ed program on October 13.

Books about reformers from the Grace Church library

The church library has curated an excellent list of resources in recognition of the 502nd anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. Learn more about the other personalities of the time, historical figures who may not receive as much attention as Luther: John Calvin, Phillip of Hesse, and John Hus, to name a few. Be sure to join us for Adult Education on October 27 as Kurt Hendel shares more about the importance of Johannes Bugenhagen, Luther’s pastor, confessor, mentor, and fellow reformer.

Early Reformers: Winds of Change, by Harold L. Fair. Cloud of Witnesses Series. Graded Press, 1988. [270 CLO]

John Calvin: Spread of the Reformation, by Richard L. Harrison, Jr. Cloud of Witnesses Series. Graded Press, 1988. [270 CLO]

Reform and Conflict: From the Medieval World to the Wars of Religion, by Rudolph W. Heinze. Baker Books, 2005. [270.5 HEI]

Women of the Reformation: Germany and Italy, by Roland H. Bainton. Augsburg, 1971. [270.6 BAI]

Philipp of Hesse: Unlikely Hero of the Reformation, by John E. Helmke. Concordia, 2018. [270.6 HEL]

The Reformation: A History, by Diarmaid MacCulloch. Viking, 2003. [270.6 MAC]

A Reformation Sourcebook: Documents From an Age of Debate, ed. Michael W. Bruening. University of Toronto Press, 2017. [270.6 REF]

The Mother of the Reformation: The Amazing Life and Story of Katharine Luther, by Ernest Kroger, tr. Mark E. DeGarmeaux. Concordia, 2013. [284.1 KRO]

Katharina von Bora: A Reformation Life, by Rudolf K. and Marilyn Markwald. Concordia, 2002. [284.1 MAR]

Katherine, Wife of Luther, (novel) by Clara Seuel Schreiber. Northwestern, 1971. [284.1 SCH]

Truth Prevails: The Undying Faith of John Hus. Vision Works, 2007. [DVD 922 HUS]

Look for these titles and more in the library and on the shelves in the cabinet in the church atrium. 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.

Joyful Voices: Happily singing together through the years

by Kathryn Jandeska

You hear them regularly on Sunday mornings, leading worship with a repertoire ranging from contemporary hymnody to the works of Bach, Mozart, and Haydn. They are Grace Church's own Joyful Voices, a quartet of four teenagers: Sophia Andrews, Ellie Beck, Sadie Beck, and Geneva Domantay.

"Joyful Voices started out as a choir for first through fifth graders," says Gwen Gotsch, their director. "In the early years we had as many as 10 to 12 voices at any one time."

However, as some children became involved in after-school activities that took them away from choir singing, the parameters for the group changed. "When Sadie, Ellie, and Geneva were going into fifth grade, they weren't ready to stop singing in Joyful Voices—and I wasn't ready for them to leave."

Gradually, Joyful Voices morphed into its current quartet. Sadie, Ellie, and Geneva have been singing together since they were first-graders in 2008; they are now seniors at Oak Park River Forest High School. Sophia, a junior, joined as a second grader in 2010.

Like any activity involving teens, rehearsals are a mash-up of socializing, accounts of the school day, private jokes, rapid-fire banter—and much laughter, all supervised by a director possessed of a relaxed, amused sensibility.

One of Ellie's first choir memories involved their blue music folders. "Mine was on the floor and I stepped on it. I ripped the whole cover of my folder. Do you remember that? There was a big hole in front of my folder!" ("So that was you?" Gwen asks, laughing.)

Although rehearsals traditionally lasted one hour, they didn't start out as 60 minutes of singing because, as Gwen points out, "Little kids can't do a one-hour session of just singing." Thus rehearsals included a lot of movement and other music-related activities.

Sadie recalls a breathing exercise from her early days in Joyful Voices: "We all laid on the floor and put our folders on our chest and laid there for about 15 minutes, just breathing."

All four play, or have played, instruments in band or orchestra. "They are all very fine musicians, they sight-read very well, and

that permits us to learn interesting music," says Gwen. "We now sing three-part and occasionally four-part pieces. These four girls have traveled a long way together."

Adult musicians, Gwen notes, have been generous about



Ellie Beck, Geneva Domantay, Sadie Beck and Sophia Andrews on a recent Sunday morning.

sharing their gifts with Joyful Voices. "Michael [Costello] finds ways to include their sound in concerts and worship." Grace member Karen Brunssen, a voice teacher at Northwestern University, has worked with them on vocal technique. When the English choral conductor Tim Brown visited Grace in 2017, he spent an hour with Joyful Voices, rehearsing an English piece that he had sung as a boy chorister—and getting them to smile while they sang. Collaborating with flutist Cindy Fudala on a performance of Leonard Bernstein's "Simple Song" was another memorable experience.

What makes this group so special? Gwen says, "It's something to do with friendships. The four of them like to see each other and they like to talk—a lot—in rehearsal! They're faithful about coming; their parents also are very committed to them being here."

"Last Easter, they pointed out they'd sung more than any other choir in the service, singing along with both the Senior Choir and the school choir, as well as singing their own music."

"I don't know any other church choir that has only four people in it," observes Geneva. "And especially high-schoolers. We've literally been doing this since first or second grade. So we've been together for ten, eleven, twelve years. And that's just really special to me, that we've been together for so long and started so young." Sophia adds, "I've gotten to know all three of them on a very different level. It feels very comfortable."

"I think of us as a group," agrees Sadie. "None of us went to the same elementary school, but then Geneva went to the same middle school as Ellie and me. So we were excited to see her. She was already like my best friend. Obviously we've been best friends ever since, and then Sophia, we see all the time in high school in the hallway. It's really nice to have three other people that you know you can count on in school."

Says Gwen, "I'm just so happy to have them as a choir."



Joyful Voices, May 2010: Ellie, Geneva Sadie, Lauren Peterson, Sarah Danganan

Be a part of change-making faith-in-action at the annual Harmony Community Church Gala



Harmony Community Church is driving change in North Lawndale, says John Bouman, President of The Shriver Center on Poverty Law and keynote speaker for the Gala:

North Lawndale is a community experiencing some of the extremes of the challenges facing the city, state and country, challenges rooted in the many facets of the old and the new Jim Crow, poverty, official neglect, and the constant struggle for community peace. Harmony Community Church is showing the courage, strength and ingenuity needed in North Lawndale for its own residents to drive the changes the community needs. And the church's example shows people in every kind of community the change-making power of faith in action.

Harmony Community Church's annual gala, hosted at Grace on Saturday, October 26, supports the church's ministry to the children, youth and adults of North Lawndale. It's a high-energy, uplifting event put on by a team of hard-working volunteers from Harmony and from Grace, with a kitchen crew headed this year by Jeff Cribbs. The Gala Committee organizers have again set an ambitious fundraising goal which will enable Harmony to complete their entire sanctuary renovation project, providing a safe, flexible space for children and teens to gather throughout the week.

The Gala evening includes appetizers, dinner, cash bar, live music, program, and a live auction and paddle raise. Live auction prizes include time at vacation homes in Montana and Cape Cod, a Lake Michigan cruise on the Good Times yacht, and some very special pies and cookies.

**Harmony Community Church
Gala Fundraiser
Saturday, October 26, 6 p.m.
Fellowship Hall
Tickets at HCCGALA19.givesmart.com**

Tickets (\$100) are available on Sundays in the atrium on October 13 and 20, or online at HCCGALA19.givesmart.com. If you can, consider becoming an event sponsor or table host. Sue Foran (708-267-1620) or Connie Zyer (708-366-4600) would be happy to tell you more about these opportunities.

Pastor James Brooks reported on plans for the Gala in Harmony's emailed newsletter on September 23. He exclaimed, "God is good — when? All the time, baby! Let's walk in that goodness and multiply it as we prepare for this phenomenal fundraiser!"

Volunteer help needed at the Harmony Food Pantry

Harmony Community Church's Wednesday Food Ministry continues to serve hundreds of families every week. On Wednesday, September 18, the food pantry served 239 people and registered them in the Greater Chicago Food Depository's new intake system. Praise the Lord for this efficient transition!

Grace Church members regularly volunteer at the Food Pantry during the day on Wednesdays. Contact Diane Carioscio at hfoodpantry@gmail.com if you'd like to serve with the Food Ministry team.

Knitters connect with fiber and stitches

by **Gwen Gotsch**

Making things by hand is about much more than the finished object. Knitting (crocheting, too) connects people to one another: those who make things to the people they're made for, and makers to other makers. The process of knitting can even help people stay connected to themselves.

These kinds of connections can all be found in Grace Church's growing knitting group and prayer shawl ministry. When Grace knitters meet in the church library at 1 p.m. on the third Tuesday of the month, they not only stitch, they talk and laugh and teach. As they untangle yarn donations and pin tags to prayer squares, they admire the colors and patterns in one another's work.

"I'm unbelievably bad at knitting," says Pat Anderson, who nevertheless is on her way to becoming a proficient knitter, with help from experienced teachers in the group. "They've had incredible patience. It's such a kind and gentle group."

Margaret Burke, who organizes knitting group meetings and projects, says that there are 10 to 12 women who come to knitting

group regularly, and there is an equal number of Grace women who make prayer shawls, prayer squares, and hats and blankets for premature babies outside of the group.

At the September 17th meeting, Karen Epstein, Anne-Marie Bogdan, and Margaret were busy sewing small labels on the corners of shawls, identifying them as gifts from Grace Church. Sewing on labels is not exactly the familiar flow of knitting or crocheting, but as

Anne-Marie said, "It has to be done. Somebody has to do it." It's less tedious when you can chat with friends as you sew.

Marilyn Fall, one of several new members who have recently joined the knitting group, has been knitting for most of her life. She belonged to a knitting group at an earlier church, so she quickly found herself feeling at home with Grace's knitters.

Why bother with hand-knitting? Marilyn laughs.

"I think it's the mental health of the knitters. Really. I'm single, I'm retired. I read, I take care of my house, I exercise, but if I didn't have knitting, what would I do? I'd sit and watch TV. It really makes me feel good to think that I can knit something that goes to somebody I don't even know, and they like it. I'm really happy with that."

Martha Rohlfing is an avid and expert knitter of prayer squares, the three to four-inch bits of knitting or crochet with a cross pattern in the center.

These fit easily in a purse or pocket and serve as a tactile reminder of God's presence and a focus for prayer. Martha knits these by the hundreds, including at night when she can't sleep.

"I love knitting these," she says, "and I love the idea that people all through the world will be benefiting from these prayer squares, even long after I'm gone."

Grace Church is well supplied with prayer shawls, thanks to knitters like Eunice Spurgat who makes two or three a month and shares them with members of her extended family as well as with members and friends of Grace Church. Pastors take prayer shawls along when they visit people who are sick, but shawls are an appropriate gift for other occasions, too – a new baby, celebrating a marriage, going off to college, or as a sign of friendship.

New shawls will be displayed in the chancel on Sunday, October 6, when they are blessed during the worship service. You're welcome to pick one up in the front of church that Sunday, or from the Health Cabinet table in the atrium on the third Sunday of the month. Or call Grace during the week and the front desk staff will set you up with a shawl. With a couple weeks' notice, Grace knitters will even make a prayer shawl in a specific color or pattern, to make the gift more meaningful and appropriate for the recipient.

The knitting group is beginning to expand into other types of charity projects, including Seafarers' Caps distributed through the Seamen's' Church Institute, Twiddle Muffs (made to occupy the hands of people with dementia), and baby items for clients at New Moms. If you'd like to get involved, talk with knitting group members in the atrium or contact Margaret Burke (mrbruke42@gmail.com; 708-358-0705). There's plenty of yarn available as well as needles for beginners. If you like to knit, crochet, weave – get involved with the knitting group and get connected!



Special concerts at Grace in October and November

Chicago Choral Artists, Considering Matthew Shepard

October 11 and 12 at 7:30 p.m., October 13 at 4 p.m.

Tickets at chicagochoralartists.org, or at the door

\$45/adults, \$40/seniors, \$25 students

On the second weekend in October Chicago Choral Artists will be performing the beautiful and poignant work by Craig Hella Johnson, "Considering Matthew Shepard." The 105-minute oratorio explores the life, death, and legacy of Matthew Shepard, a gay college student who tragically lost his life due to a hate crime on October 12, 1998. Johnson takes the listener on an emotional journey through Matthew Shepard's story by featuring lyrics from Shepard's own journal entries, narratives by his friends and family, as well as passages written about his death, the picketing of his funeral, and other events that followed. In an interview with Colorado Public Radio Johnson said, "The piece actually became a whole lot more than just the story of the suffering. It needed to become this larger invitation to return to love, and to return to remember who we are as human beings in the deepest sense of our essence."

Chicago Choral Artists has been presenting innovative music making to Chicago audiences for over 40 years. Michael D. Costello currently serves as Artistic Director.



Windsbach Boys Choir

Sunday, November 3, 7 p.m.

Tickets at ticketor.com/grace or call 708-366-6900

\$45/adults, \$40/seniors, \$25 students

The highly-acclaimed German boys choir comes to Grace on Sunday, November 3, for a 7 p.m. concert. The traveling choir consists of 50 singers, ages 12–19, who live and board together with another 70 singing students at their school in Windsbach, Germany. The group has performed with orchestras through Germany and has traveled all over the world. With a focus on sacred repertoire, the choir covers a *cappella* works of all eras, as well as the great oratorios of J. S. Bach, Händel, Mozart, Mendelssohn and Brahms. Conductor Martin Lehmann includes a wide range of works in concert programs.



Vocal and chamber music

The Aestas Consort, a professional choral group directed by Maurice Boyer, presents "Light of Life: Songs of Prayer and Jubilation," on Sunday, October 20, 8 p.m., in Grace's sanctuary. The concert is part of Concordia University's annual Lectures in Church Music

The Kontras Quartet, Grace's string quartet in residence, plays music of Haydn, Gabriela Lena Frank, and Schubert in the sanctuary at Grace on Friday, October 25 at 7:30 p.m.

GRACE NEWS

KNITTING/CROCHETING GROUP meets on Tuesday, October 15, at 1 p.m. in the church library. Come and work on prayer shawls or prayer squares, or bring your own project. All are welcome, including beginners!

RETIRED LEADERS AND OTHERS meet on Tuesday, October 8, at 10 a.m. Father Pfleger is the guest speaker.

GRACE NOTES MAILING CREW welcomes helpers to work on the November newsletter on Thursday, October 31, at 9:30 a.m. in the church library.

CORNERSTONES fellowship and Bible study meets on Wednesday mornings. Come for snacks and fellowship at 10 a.m. followed by Bible study led by the pastors at 10:30. On October 16, Morning Prayer at 11:30 is followed by lunch, served in Fellowship Hall. All are welcome at the luncheon, prepared by Cornerstone Cooks.

RELIGION IN LITERATURE. The book group meets next on Friday, October 18, at 8 p.m. for its first-ever Poetry Night. Please be prepared to read one of your favorite poems and share the reason you have chosen the poem. (If possible bring a few copies of the poem to distribute to the group.) The host is Ruth Rehwaldt, 403 N. Marion St., Apt. 2C, Oak Park. All are welcome. The reading list for 2019-20 is posted at GraceRiverForest.org > Welcome > Fellowship.

YOGA CLASSES, taught by Ackli Howell, continue on Thursday evenings at 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Bring a mat, beach towel or small blanket, and wear comfortable clothing that allows you to move. Questions? Call Ackli at 708-516-2701. New participants are always welcome!

MOMS OF LITTLES meet on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month, in the Youth Room at Grace. Contact Pastor Lauren for more information (lwegner@graceriverforest.org; 708-366-6900 ext 264).

FINDING HOPE: SUPPORT FOR CHRONIC ILLNESS. Finding Hope is an informal monthly gathering that provides support, fellowship and education for people experiencing all types of chronic illness. Attend every month or as your schedule allows. The group meets on the second Friday of every month, 10–11 a.m., in the church library, including Friday, October 11.

MIDWEEK WORSHIP AND LUNCH. Come to Grace for a brief worship service and lunch on Wednesday, October 16. The Service of Morning Prayer begins at 11:30, lunch around noon. You'll be on your way by 1 p.m., refreshed by God's word, by song, by friendly conversation, and by a good meal!

PRAYERS

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 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.

THANK YOU

From Carol Stanger: My heartfelt thanks to Pastor Lyle, the Pastors Wegner, Prayer Chain and Grace members who offered prayers, made phone calls and sent cards at the time of my brother Sheldon's stroke and passing. It all meant more than you could know. God bless you.

WE CELEBRATE

WE CELEBRATE with Evelyn Rae Koch, daughter of Stephanie and Spencer Koch, who will be baptized on October 6.

WE CELEBRATE with Meredith Hill and David Mulligan, to be married on October 5; and with Josh Heine and Mariah Echevarria, to be married on October 20.


ALTAR FLOWERS

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

September 29 - In memory of Mary Ellen and Russell Andrew from Jane Andrew.

PASTORS' EMERGENCY PHONE

Call 708-689-3032 for emergency pastoral care on weekends, or when the Grace building is closed.

get your
Flu

Shot

**Flu Shot Clinic
at Grace
Sunday, October 13
9 a.m. — 11 a.m.
Grace gym**

**Flu and pneumonia
vaccines will be available.**

Flu shot vaccines are provided by Walgreens. Bring your insurance and/or Medicare information so that Walgreens can bill your insurance. You may wish to check with your insurance ahead of time to find out if the vaccine is covered. If you wish to pay cash, the cost is \$35. Please have exact change.

Pneumonia vaccines are given to adults age 65 and older. If you are not sure if you need a pneumonia shot or have already received one, please call your doctor's office and verify which shot you have received and when it was given.

Working toward racial equity at Grace Lutheran School

by **Bill Koehne, Principal**

The mission of Grace Lutheran School is to equip students for a life of discipleship by helping them to grow in faith, knowledge, and character. We strive to help all students understand themselves, their relationship with one another, and their place in God's kingdom knowing that all people are precious gifts from God, created in God's image.

During the 2018-19 school year, the administration and faculty of Grace Lutheran School began discussing the topic of systemic racism in America and how this impacts our school, curriculum, instruction, and the wider community. The administration and faculty have attended workshops as well as read and discussed books and articles on systemic racism and racial inequality. One common thread is the need to listen.

In an effort to take an inclusive and proactive approach, school representatives met with about a dozen parents in May to listen to their views of what our school's strengths and weaknesses are when it comes to the issues of race. Grace's staff desires to continue developing our commitment to equality in the learning and community experiences of our students and families. We desire to commit to a school culture where the church, faculty, and families work together toward activism and justice in our teaching, learning, and service.

Our goal going forward is to work with parents to recognize issues that our students and families face at Grace and collaboratively identify priorities for growth in racial equity in our classrooms and wider school community. We have made plans to continue this important work with the guidance of Dr. Sarah Dennis and Yvonne DuBose who are anti-racism and racial healing advocates and consultants, specializing in education. In October they are leading a process that includes a survey of parents of students identified as races other than white and meetings with these parents. The process will help to determine future areas of growth for the school. They will also lead a day-long professional development program for our faculty and staff in October and continue to work with us throughout the school year.

Grace School news

Grace School students will Walk With Grace on Friday, October 4, in a walkathon raising money for their school. The big day is Friday, October 4. Students walk varying distances based on their grade level, from one mile for preschoolers to six miles for junior high students. At the end of the walk, there are games and activities for all in the gym—plus early dismissal at lunchtime.



Grace School Walkathons always include a service project. This year students are collecting snacks, cleaning supplies, K-cups, and other much-needed items for families served by Ronald McDonald House Charities. Ronald McDonald Houses keep families with sick children together by offering a place to stay near hospitals where the children are receiving treatment. Grace School classes are competing to see who can bring in the most items. The school year theme of "Rooted and built up in Christ" fits nicely with the Ronald McDonald slogan, "The houses that love built." Grace School students share the love of Christ by caring for families in need.

Proceeds from Walk With Grace support the operating budget of Grace School. The walkathon is one of three major fundraisers for the school. The Annual Fund for Grace School and A Graceful Evening also help to fund Grace School's annual budget.

FAMILY FUN FRIDAY

October 25, 6–8 p.m.

Church and School Families
Kindergarten – 5th grade

- Play games in open gym
- Craft project
- Pizza, salad, treats and lemonade
- Enjoy the company of other Grace families
- Younger siblings welcome



Free-will offering for meal and project. Suggested donation \$5/each or \$20/family. Please register at GraceRiverForest.org by midnight Thursday, October 24.

**First Look Fridays
at Grace Lutheran School
Drop by for a tour —
see the school in action!**

**October 18, November 15,
December 20
8:30–10:30am**



Sunday, October 6, 4-7 p.m.

**Traditional German food • Wine and beer
German oompah band and sing-along • Laterne parade
Silent auction • Erzgebirge booth • And more!**

**Advance tickets available online
at GraceRiverForest.org through Friday, October 4**
Adults (12 and up) \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door
Children (age 5-11) \$8 in advance, \$10 at the door
Children under 5 Free

