

Grace Notes

February 2020



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

Called to discipleship, or, How you can help



Photo by Dave Wegner

by Pastor Dave Lyle

As Jesus went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him. Matthew 4:21-22

We recently heard in worship this story of Jesus calling the first disciples. Amazingly, they dropped their nets and followed this teacher whom they had never before met. They followed Jesus; that's what disciples do. Like the first disciples, we are also called to follow Jesus. What does that look like?

In this time of staff transition at Grace, many people have asked me how they can help. Thank you! I am grateful for your kind words of support and your offer to

**I pray that you will be the
disciples that Jesus calls you to
be. Not perfect, but faithful.**

help Grace Church live out its mission and ministry. I have good news for you! You can help! How? By answering Jesus' call to discipleship. To follow Jesus is to be one who is dead to sin and alive in Christ. To follow Jesus is to live a cruciform life. This means living our lives in certain ways.

Michael Foss, in his book "Power Surge: Six Marks of Discipleship for a Changing Church," paints a vivid picture of what it means to not simply belong to a church, but to be a disciple. The six attributes that mark a disciple's life are daily prayer, weekly worship, Bible reading, service, spiritual relationships, and giving. If you want to help Grace, follow Jesus.

Continued on page 2

How to be a disciple in times of change

Continued from page 1

• **Prayer.** Living a life of faith requires conversation with our God. Pray for Grace, and for the world we serve. Prayer for your congregation's leadership and staff, for the soon-to-be-formed call committee, for pastors who may consider this call. Pray, and do so without ceasing.

• **Worship.** I don't think there's ever a time when we need to attend worship less frequently, but being present for worship is certainly important during this season of our congregation's life. Don't fade away; lean in together. We need the gifts of Jesus given in the proclaimed word and in his body and blood. These are the lifeblood of our community.

• **Bible reading.** It's not just for pastors! If you are not in the habit of reading scripture every day, this is a great opportunity to do so. We will have devotional booklets available during Lent, and I can recommend other resources as well. Or just pick up the Bible and read! God's Word is living and active; it will act for good in your life.

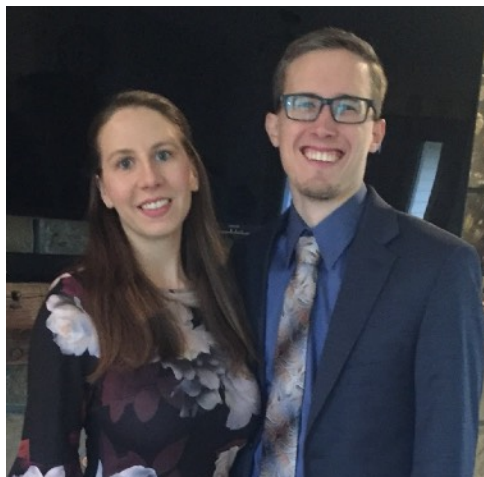
• **Service.** As I do my job, you can do yours. We need more ushers, greeters, offering counters, altar guild members, soundboard operators. You name it, we need it! You can always talk to Karen Christopher in the church office; she'll point you in

the right direction to serve. When other service opportunities are offered, jump in and help.

• **Spiritual relationships.** I often tell new members, "Worship is the most important thing we do as Christians, but if it's the only thing we do, our faith will likely wither rather than prosper." Join in other ministries at Grace. Talk to people. Come to Lenten suppers. Join the discussion during an Adult Education class. Volunteer to cook meals for Grace Care. You never know when a relationship will deepen into a spiritual friendship.

• **Giving.** Yes! Generous giving is a crucial mark of discipleship. Jesus says that where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. I am thankful for the generosity displayed by the people of Grace Church, and part of a living, active discipleship is to give both abundantly and consistently.

There you go; now you know. That's how you can help! Jesus calls you. He died to raise you up as someone who can faithfully follow. I pray that you will be the disciples that Jesus calls you to be. Not perfect, but faithful. May the marks of discipleship in your life be a witness to others.



Meet Makayla Dahleen, Youth Ministry Associate

Makayla Dahleen will be working at Grace through the summer as the part-time Youth Ministry Associate. Makayla is in her final semester of course work at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC). She will graduate with a Masters of Divinity with an Interfaith Emphasis and be eligible for ordination as a Lutheran pastor after graduation in May of 2020. At LSTC, Makayla works for the Center for Christian Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice and appreciates opportunities for contextual education and multicultural experiences. She graduated from Luther College in 2016 with a major in religion and enjoyed singing in choir and studying voice. While in college she spent her summers at Lutheran Bible camps creating fun and creative lessons and worship experiences for youth of all ages. Makayla enjoys reading, cooking, and travel, sports, and adventuring outdoors with her husband, Jacob Dahleen.

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

Deadlines and submissions. The March 2020 issue of Grace Notes will be mailed on Friday, February 28. The deadline for copy is Wednesday, February 19; the issue covers events through the first week of April. 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.

Ash Wednesday, February 26 — Worship at 8:30 and 11:30 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Ash Wednesday is on February 26. Worship with the school children at 8:30 a.m., or with seniors and others at Cornerstone worship at 11:30 a.m. Lunch is served in Fellowship Hall after this service. Evening worship on Ash Wednesday begins at 7 p.m. All three services include ashes and Holy Communion. (There is no Lenten supper on Ash Wednesday.)

Lent mid-week worship begins March 4

We gather for mid-week worship during Lent on Wednesdays, March 4 through April 1. Our theme is “Wondrous Love,” with readings from Matthew’s gospel.

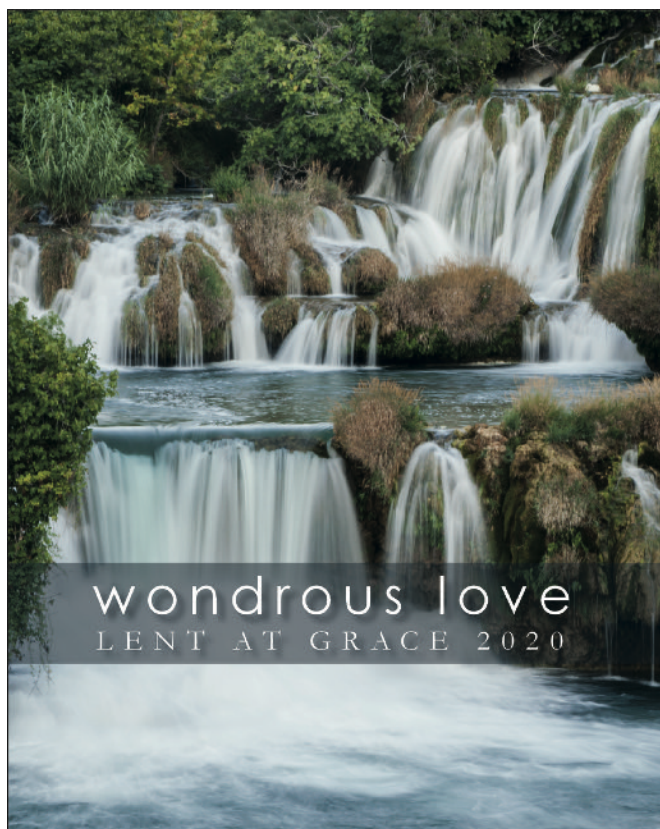
Morning Prayer at 11:30 a.m. with lunch on March 11 and 25.

Evening Prayer at 7 p.m., with supper in Fellowship Hall at 6 p.m.

Devotions for Lent 2020

Pick up a copy of this year’s Lent devotional booklet from Augsburg Fortress, “Wondrous Love,” in the atrium beginning Sunday, February 9. There is a Bible reading for each day from Matthew’s gospel, as well as a photo, a quote to ponder, a reflection, and a prayer.

Other Lenten devotional material is also available at Grace, including devotions from Hope-Full Living and “Strangers in the Land,” with biblical perspectives on immigration issues. (More information on page 7.)



Stephen Ministers complete training



*New Stephen Ministers (clockwise, from top):
Mary Paulson, Ginny Swaba, Deb Maxwell,
Esther Armstrong, Julie Hinz.*

Stephen Ministers are Christian men and women trained to provide high quality, confidential one-to-one care to people who are hurting or experiencing a hard time in life. Five new Stephen Ministers were commissioned during worship services at Grace on Sunday, January 12, after completing several months of training.

When might someone need a Stephen Minister? There are all kinds of situations in which a person might benefit from the emotional and spiritual support of a Stephen Minister. Here are some examples:

- People who are grieving the loss of a loved one.
- People who are being treated for cancer, and members of their families.
- People who are terminally ill, and members of their families.
- People who are experiencing divorce — before, during, and after.
- People who are homebound or who reside in a nursing home.
- People facing issues such as infertility, adoption, or an unplanned pregnancy, or adjusting to the birth of a new baby.
- People experiencing significant job-related stress or the loss of a job.
- Parents whose children are leaving home.
- People who are moving or changing their living arrangements.
- People affected by disasters of violence or who are experiencing a spiritual crisis.
- People with other critical needs or those undergoing major life transitions.

If you are interested in the companionship of a Stephen Minister, please talk with Pastor Lyle or with Pat Gulik, our Parish Nurse.

February pre-Lent cantata foreshadows the Passion

The cantata for the February 23 Bach Cantata Vespers is BWV 159, *Behold! We go up to Jerusalem*. It will be sung here at Grace on the last Sunday before Lent; it was first performed on the last Sunday before Lent in Leipzig, Germany, in 1729.

The starting point for the cantata is Luke 18:31, in which Jesus foretells his Passion. “Concerted” music was not performed in the churches of Leipzig during Lent, so the next major choral work that was heard in church in 1729 was the Good Friday performance of the St. Matthew Passion. Here at Grace, the next Cantata series performance is also Bach’s St. Matthew Passion, heard in two performances on the last weekend in March, a week before Palm Sunday. The recitatives and arias in February’s cantata reflect on Jesus’ suffering and death in ways that are similar to Bach’s passions.

The Grace School 5-8 choir joins the cantata choir for this service, singing the chorale tune “O Sacred Head Now Wounded” that accompanies and comments on an aria sung by the alto soloist. They’ll also sing other music in the service.

Pastor Lyle is the homilist, with an organ prelude played by Steve Wente of Concordia University, a frequent guest at the Grace organ.

Come to an organ recital at Grace on February 9

International concert organist, and recording artist Gail Archer will play a recital at Grace on Sunday, February 9, at 4 p.m. Admission is free. The program includes music of Bach, Brahms, Boulanger and others.

Ms. Archer is college organist at Vassar College, and director of the music program at Barnard College, Columbia University.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Sunday, February 2, 8:30 and 11 a.m.

PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD

Malachi 3:1-4, Psalm 84, Hebrews 2:14-18, Luke 2:22-40

Sunday, February 9, 8:30 and 11 a.m.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

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

Sunday, February 16, 8:30 and 11 a.m.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

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

Sunday, February 23, 8:30 and 11 a.m.

TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD

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

February 26, 8:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., and 7 p.m.

ASH WEDNESDAY

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; Psalm 51:1-17, 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10, Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Sunday, March 1, 8:30 and 11 a.m.

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

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

Sunday, February 23, 3:45 p.m.

BACH CANTATA VESPERS

Sehet! Wir gehn hinauf gen Jerusalem, BWV 159

Behold! We go up to Jerusalem

Organ Prelude: Steven Wente, Concordia University Chicago

Motet: G. P. Palestrina's Confitemini Domino

Homilist: David R. Lyle, Grace, River Forest

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

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
ST. MATTHEW
PASSION

MARCH 28, 2020 6 P.M. + MARCH 29, 2020 4 P.M.



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).

February 2, 9, 16

King David

Dr. Michael Graves, Wheaton College

David the son of Jesse of Bethlehem is perhaps the most complex, noble, and tragic character in the Old Testament. His tumultuous rise to kingship and dramatic struggles with enemies without and within are described in 1-2 Samuel. Different portraits of David are painted in the Psalms and the book of Chronicles. The memory of David plays a major role in prophetic books. We are often left asking: Who is David? This three-week study will focus on David's rise to power, his kingship, and his symbolic role in scripture. In David, we will see how the Old Testament addresses major themes such as justice and mercy through the use of story and poetry.

February 23

Solar at Grace

Grace Board of Trustees

The new solar panels have been installed and are online (photo at right), supplying solar-generated electricity to our building. Learn more about this project and all the research that preceded it from knowledgeable members of Grace's Board of Trustees.

March 1

Mindfulness and Prayer

Steve Wendel, Applied Behavioral Scientist

Grace member Steve Wendel will share lessons from behavioral science that might help us better live out our faith in our daily lives. He'll draw upon his recently published book, "Spiritual Design," and discuss both the research and practical techniques.

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.

GIFT, February 23, 9:45 a.m.

"Marked by the Cross"

Fellowship Hall

Grace members and families of all ages are invited to Fellowship Hall on Sunday, February 23, for another Sunday of GIFT: Growing in Faith Together. We'll focus on preparing for Lent, with music and prayer, an art project, and discussion questions for adults. We'll make cards for vets and also kick off a church-wide Lenten service project, collecting items for Baby Care Kits for distribution by Lutheran World Relief. All are welcome!



Photo by Travis Rime Brooks, shot from a drone

A love story, from a member of Grace



Dear Grace Friends,

Worshiping at Grace means anticipating the best. When I come to worship I sit down in the pew and look through the bulletin to see what hymns Pastor Costello has chosen to open our

hearts to sing, knowing I will be happy. I read all

the verses of the second communion hymn because we rarely have enough time to sing it.

The celebration of the new year is a time when we look for changes that will make us happier, and so I came to worship at Grace on New Year's Eve. Everyone had received communion and we were back sitting in our comfortable pews when Pastor Lyle smiled at us and said: "Okay, let's sing 'Joy to the World!'" And we stood up and toasted our Savior as we celebrated Christ's birth with very happy hearts. I was still singing when I went to the coat room to put my coat on, especially when the ever perfect gentleman, Pastor Lucking, held it up for me as he always does, so I could slip my arms into it with comfort and ease. So much Grace to enjoy on New Year's Eve!

That bright and shiny night led to a cloudy morning, when I realized that two of the rings I always wear were missing. Like the poor woman who searched everywhere for her lost coin, I searched through my sheets, my pockets, the floors, the car, and the garbage without success.

I prayed and pretended to be patient while waiting for the church to be open on January 2. I called the front desk. "Yes,

someone found two rings in the bathroom, and you can pick them up at the front desk." My silent prayer of "Lord, have mercy" turned into shouts of "Thank you, Jesus!"

I was never in the bathroom, and thought my rings may have fallen off when I put my coat back on. So there is some mystery to this very happy ending, but I am certain that their return is a love story. A love story that is shared by all of the family members of this amazing place we know as Grace. We share this love story because of the love of a Savior who was born to give us life and because we were created in love that we may love and be loved.

I will give thanks for that love each time I look at my rings. I love them not because they are lovely to look at, but because of the beautiful love story of how they connect me to two of the most special women in my life — my daughter and my dearly missed mother-in-law ("love" because there are no "-laws" that could ever bind us together so well and wonderfully).

Thank you for returning the circles of love I wear around my fingers. And thank you, Grace friends, all the more for blessing us all into an unending circle of Christian love.

May God bless you always, and in All Ways,

Marnie Rourke

*We can always trust the future,
because the future belongs to God!*

Marnie Rourke is a retired pastor and a member of Grace Church.

"Read all about it" in books from the church library

Heard something in an Adult Ed class that you'd like to explore further? The Grace Church library offers many resources related to programs going on at Grace. Here are some books related to the January 26 Adult Ed poetry program and the Justice and Peace Committee's programming on immigration issues.

Prayer, faith and poetry

Celebrations: Rituals of Peace and Prayer, by Maya Angelou. Random House, 2006. [811 ANG]

What Cannot Be Fixed, by Jill Pal  cz Baumgaertner. Poema Poetry Series, Cascade Books, 2014. Includes "O Antiphons." [811 BAU]

A Timbered Choir: The Sabbath Poems, 1979-1997, by Wendell Berry. Counterpoint, 1998. [811 BER]

Christmas with Dietrich Bonhoeffer, ed. Manfred Weber. Augsburg Books, 2005. [263 BON]

A Miniature Cathedral, and Other Poems, by Walter Wangerin, Jr. Harper & Row, 1987. [811 BAU]

Immigration: Responding in faith

Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible, 2d ed., by M. Daniel Carroll R. Brazos Press, 2013. [261.8 CAR]

Welcoming the Stranger: Justice, Compassion and Truth in the Immigration Debate: a Christian

Response to the Immigration Debate, by Matthew Soerens and Jennie Hwang. IVP Books, 2009. [261.8 SOE]

They Are Us: Lutherans and Immigration, by Stephen Bouman and Ralston Deffenbaugh. Augsburg Fortress, 2009. [284.1 BOU]

They Take Our Jobs! And 20 Other Myths About Immigration, by Aviva Chomsky. Beacon Press, 2007. [304.8 CHO]

The library is staffed on Sunday mornings and is open for self-service during the week. All are welcome to check out books.

Immigration: Responding in Faith

During the next two months, Grace's Justice and Peace Committee is sponsoring educational events in collaboration with Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church of Oak Park, along with discussion groups at Grace.

Report on a Trip to the Border

Rev. Ben Lynch, Co-Pastor of Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church

Sunday, February 2, 2 p.m., at Grace

Pastor Ben Lynch of Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church in Oak Park will share his first-person experiences, learnings and reflections from an ecumenical witness trip to Brownsville, Texas and Matamoros, Mexico, in mid-October of 2019.

The ELCA's AMMPARO Project

Mary Campbell, Director

Sunday, February 16, 2 p.m., at Fair Oaks Presbyterian, 744 Fair Oaks Ave., Oak Park

In Spanish, the word *amparo* means the protection of a living creature from suffering or damage. The ELCA's AMMPARO project provides accompaniment and advocacy for children who are forced to flee their communities because of violence, poverty, environmental displacement or lack of opportunities in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala.

“Strangers in the Land” Devotions, small group discussions during Lent

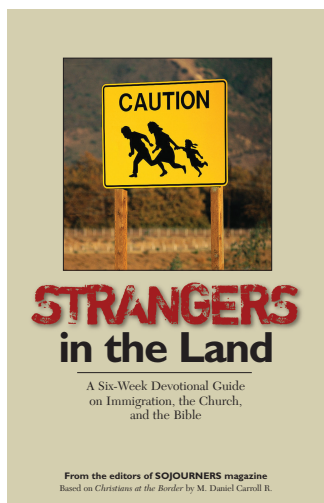
Learn more about immigration issues and consider how you will respond by following a six-week devotional guide, “Strangers in the Land,” prepared by the editors of Sojourners Magazine. Then join other Grace members for small group discussions on these topics on three Sunday afternoons following the 11 a.m. worship service, on March 8, March 22, and April 5. A light lunch will be served, followed by discussions.

“Strangers in the Land” addresses the ongoing debate about immigration reform by looking at six major biblical statements, including “All persons are made in the image of God,” “The Bible calls us to practice hospitality,” and “Christ commissions us to love our neighbors.” Each daily devotion includes a Bible passage, a brief excerpt from the book “Christians at the Border,” by M. Daniel Carroll R., a question or two for contemplation, and a prayer. The guide also includes weekly

group devotionals which will be incorporated in our Sunday afternoon sessions at Grace.

Copies of “Strangers in the Land” will be available at Grace at no cost during February. You can pick one up at the Justice and Peace table in the atrium on February 2 and 9. Copies of the devotional guide will also be available at the reception desk during the week, and an ebook version for Kindle is available from Amazon.

Supplemental reading: For a more in-depth look at the biblical call for Christians to “welcome the stranger” and the case for viewing our country's immigration policy through the lens of Scripture, read “Christians at the Border,” by M. Daniel Carroll R., professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College. A limited number of copies of this resource will be available from the Justice and Peace Committee during February.



Immigration: Responding in Faith

LEARN. Information sessions on the crisis at the U.S. Southern border, February 2 and 16.

READ. “Strangers in the Land: A Six-Week Devotional Guide on Immigration, the Church and the Bible.” Available at Grace at no cost, or purchase the ebook on Amazon.

PARTICIPATE. Small-group discussions, 12:15 p.m., on March 8, March 15, April 5. Register at the reception desk, or online at GraceRiverForest.org.

SUPPLEMENTAL READING. “Christians at the Border,” by M. Daniel Carroll R., Professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College.

Celebrate American Heart Month Together

Trying to keep your heart healthy?

Joining forces
with friends or family
may keep you
more motivated.

#ourhearts
are healthier together

#ourhearts
motivate each other



February is American Heart Month

Did you know that people who have close relationships at home, work or in their community tend to be healthier and live longer? One reason, according to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), is that we're more successful at meeting our health goals when we join forces with others.

Why connecting is good for your heart

Feeling connected with others and having positive, close relationships benefit our overall health, including our blood pressure and weight. Having people in our lives who motivate and care for us helps, as do feelings of closeness and companionship.

You don't have to make big changes all at once. Small steps will get you where you want to go.

Move more. Invite members of your faith community to join you in your efforts to be more physically active. For example, walk together on a regular basis or join an exercise class at your local community center.

Aim for a healthy weight. Find someone in your faith community who also wants to reach or maintain a healthy weight. Do healthy activities together, like walking or playing on a neighborhood sports team. Share low-calorie, low-sodium meals or recipes.

Follow these heart healthy
lifestyle tips with your friends,
family, coworkers, and others in
your community and you'll all
be heart healthier for it.

Quit smoking. To help you quit, ask others for support or join a support group. Research shows that people are much more likely to quit if their spouse, friend, or sibling does.

Manage stress. Join with a friend or family member to do a relaxing activity every day, like walking, yoga, or meditation, or participate in a stress management program together.

Improve sleep. Family members and friends, remind each other to turn off the screen and stick to a regular bedtime.

Instead of watching TV before bed, relax by listening to music, reading, or taking a bath.

Track your heart health stats, together. Keeping a log of your blood pressure, weight goals, physical activity, and if you have diabetes, your blood sugars, will help you stay on a heart healthy track. Ask your friends or family to join you in the effort.

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Prayer: Thank you for the gift of community. Help me to encourage and support others. Inspire us all to care for one another and our own health.

Information on this page is adapted from a bulletin insert published by Advocate Aurora Health.

Health Cabinet table in the atrium, February 16

Pat Gulik, Grace's Parish Nurse, will have more information about heart health at the Health Cabinet table in the atrium between services on Sunday, February 16. You can also have your blood pressure checked and pick up a prayer square or prayer shawl for yourself or a friend.

GRACEFUL EVENING

MARCH 14, 2020

The 19th Century Club
178 FOREST AVE • OAK PARK • IL

Graceful Evening is only six weeks away, and we are excited to share more about the upcoming event!

Graceful Evening is the annual dinner-auction fundraiser that supports Grace School. It's a fun evening of fellowship for both the church and the school community. This year it's at the elegant 19th Century Club in Oak Park. Free valet parking will be available at the door, or park in the parking garage at Forest and Lake.

This year's Fund-A-Need, "Peaceful Bodies, Productive Minds," focuses on bringing in more ergonomic, alternative and collaborative seating and desk options into our classrooms for

students and faculty. Our team has worked closely with teachers to select specific items

Buy tickets, donate online at graceful2020.givesmart.com

which will benefit each classroom. More details are available online at graceful2020.givesmart.com.

New this year we are featuring a Whiskey Pull in addition to the popular Wine Pull. Purchase a ticket and "pull" for a chance to win a bottle from labels such as Basil Haydens, Hibiki, Angel's Envy, Glenmorangie and more!

The silent auction has something for everyone! Summer camps and weekend getaways, sports tickets and memorabilia, kids' crafts and games, food and wine collections, one-of-a-kind art and so much more! You don't need to be present to participate in the silent auction! Just sign up on our website and bid right from your phone or computer!

Benefit Brunch for Hope for Grieving Children

**Saturday, February 8, 10:00-11:45 a.m.
Fellowship Hall**

Hope for Grieving Children trains caregivers, especially in developing countries, to support orphaned children as they recover from the loss of a parent. Tickets for the brunch (\$30) are available at hopeforgrievingchildren.org. Or contact Ellie Schnack (kinderellie@gmail.com) or Tony Stephens (tonystephens@sbcglobal.net) for more information. Donate online at hopeforgrievingchildren.org.

Tickets for Graceful Evening are available through February 28 only. Purchase them online at graceful2020.givesmart.com or in the church atrium on Sunday, February 9 and 23.

Have an item to donate? Interested in a program ad?

Please email gracefulevening@graceriverforest.org and we'll get you more details and even arrange pick-up if needed! All the proceeds directly benefit Grace Lutheran School.

For more updates, "Like" the page for A Graceful Evening on Facebook! Look for us at facebook.com/gracefulevening2020.

Emily Hartung and Amanda Steelman, chairs
gracefulevening@graceriverforest.org

CYFM
Children Youth & Family Ministry

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

gpo
grace point of oak park

Mardi Gras

CELEBRATION

Come to the Mardi Gras celebration for Grace Church and School for all ages!

Enjoy an authentic New Orleans style meal, create a mask, fun and fellowship!

Friday, February 21
6:00pm - 8:30pm • Fellowship Hall

Sign up at www.graceriverforest.org

MEAL and DRINKS Provided

- Sausage Gumbo • Seafood Gumbo
- Vegetarian Red Beans and Rice
- Salad, Bread and Fruit Tray
- Macaroni and Cheese
- King Cakes

Julie Modrich
jmodrich@graceriverforest.org

Freewill offering welcome

GRACE NEWS

KNITTING/CROCHETING GROUP meets on Tuesday, February 18, 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, February 11, at 10 a.m. in the church library. Grace Cantor Michael Costello will present "The Life and Music of Bach, Schütz, and Handel." Guests are welcome.

GRACE NOTES MAILING CREW welcomes helpers to work on the February newsletter on Thursday, February 27, 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 Ash Wednesday, February 26, there is a service of Holy Communion at 11:30 a.m., followed by lunch served in Fellowship Hall. All are welcome at the luncheon, prepared by Cornerstone Cooks.

RELIGION IN LITERATURE. The book group meets on Friday, February 21, at 8:00 p.m. at the home of Jeff and Claudia Wood, 1027 Thatcher Ave., River Forest. Amy Claud leads the discussion of Willa Cather's *Death Comes for the Archbishop*. All are welcome!

YOGA CLASSES, taught by Ackli Howell, meet on Thursdays 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? Contact Ackli.

MOMS OF LITTLES The group for mothers of small children meets on Wednesdays, February 5 and 19, at 6:30 p.m. in the Youth Room.

FINDING HOPE: SUPPORT FOR CHRONIC ILLNESS. Finding Hope, an informal monthly gathering that provides support, fellowship and education for people experiencing all types of chronic illness, meets on February 14, 10–11:30 a.m., in the church library.

BUILDING CLOSED

Grace Church and School will close on February 17 for Presidents Day.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Grace Lutheran Church General Fund

Church budgeted contributions

July 1, 2019 – January 29, 2020 \$ 1,224,000
(30 Sundays, \$40,800 per week)

Church actual contributions

July 1, 2019 – January 29, 2020 \$ 1,096,000
(Last year at this time: \$987,000)

Church giving is \$128,000 below budget and \$109,000 ahead of last year. The estimated deficit at the end of January is \$117,000.

PRAYERS

WE PRAY for all those who mourn the death of Wes Wilkie.

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.

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.

February 2 - In celebration of Walter Martin's birthday, by his family.

PASTORS' EMERGENCY PHONE

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

NEW MEMBERS CLASS

The spring New Members class starts on Sunday, March 1. The group meets from 9:45 to 10:45 a.m. in Pastor Lyle's office. The class runs through May 3, with no class on Palm Sunday or Easter (April 5 and 12). Talk with Pastor Lyle for more information. Or contact Karen Christopher, Church Administrative Assistant, (kchristopher@graceriverforest.org; 708-366-6900, ext. 207).

First Look Fridays at Grace School

Drop by for a tour of our Early Childhood and Elementary classrooms.

Feb. 21, March 20, 8:30–10:30 am

Grace School adopts a variable tuition model

Bill Koehne, principal of Grace Lutheran School, recently shared information with Grace School families about a new Variable Tuition Policy, approved by the Elementary Education Committee and Church Council.

With variable tuition families pay what they can reasonably afford for their children to attend Grace School. Variable tuition replaces the contribution model formerly in use at the school, in which families were informed of the cost of education at Grace School and were then asked to make a pledge to support the school.

Any family may apply for variable tuition. Applications are submitted directly to FACTS Management, a third-party service that specializes in evaluating families' financial capacity. FACTS evaluates the application and makes a recommendation to the school's Variable Tuition Committee. Using that recommendation, the committee determines the variable tuition amount for each family. The factors considered include income and number of dependents. The goal is that each family is asked to pay what they can reasonably afford, with every family making a

financial investment in their child's education.

The does not anticipate that variable tuition will bring in a lot more revenue from families. So why is Grace making the change? In the last few years Grace Lutheran Church has been subsidizing the school at over \$500,000 annually. While the church has been able to absorb these subsidies, and will continue to support school finances in a substantial way, this is not a sustainable model.

In 2014 a special School Funding Committee, formed to explore options for funding the school, recommended in its report to the Church Council that Grace continue its commitment to being a school financially available to all families that desire a Christian education, but that it move to a tuition and financial aid model, using a third-party company to determine financial need. This past fall the Elementary Education Committee appointed a sub-committee to investigate such a change. After extensive research and planning, the Committee approved the move to Variable Tuition for the 2020-21 school year. In the 2020-21 fiscal year, the school will be funded by tuition, fundraising, and church subsidy.

School endowment fund. The 2014 School Funding Committee also recommended that Grace School establish an endowment to support financial assistance to families unable to afford full tuition, and steps are being taken to get this process started. Conversations with potential donors to an endowment fund indicate that they will be more willing to give to a Grace School endowment when there is full transparency in the process of determining the amount families can afford to pay.

Parent meetings were held during the week of January 20, to answer questions about the new funding model, and in an email Bill Koehne assured parents that "this shift in practice in no way changes our commitment to making a Grace Lutheran School education affordable to families. We want all of our students to return to Grace and will work with families to determine the right tuition amount."

More information about Variable Tuition and tuition for the 2020-21 school year is available on the school website at GraceRiverForest.org/School.



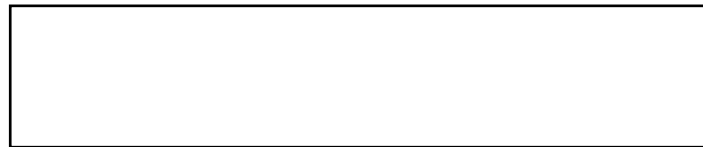
Basketball champs. Grace School's 7-8 girls basketball team took first place at the St Peter, Arlington Heights, tournament on the last weekend in January. They are hoping for an invitation to the Lutheran Sports Association State Basketball Tournament later this season. The 7-8 girls are coached by Kristi Underhill, who teaches physical education, math and science classes.

Employment at Grace School. The school is seeking teachers for the 2020-21 academic year for first and sixth grade. More information is available on the website at GraceRiverForest.org/School

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June 15-19, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Optional extended day available until 5 p.m.
Ages 3 through current 4th graders

Climb aboard for mountains of fun at Rocky Railway!
On this faith-filled adventure, kids discover that trusting
Jesus pulls them through life's ups and downs.
Go to GraceRiverForest.org for a link to the registration page.

