

GRACE NOTES

December 2017

FOR TO US A SON IS GIVEN



Experiencing God's Amazing Grace!

through

-  Meaningful
Worship
-  Caring
Community
-  Inspirational
Learning
-  Loving
Service
-  Gracious
Invitation

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A Note **FROM THE PASTOR**

Dear People of Grace,



As we prepare to begin a new church year and shortly after that a new calendar year, our thoughts naturally focus on change and transition. In this season of hope and the celebration of the birth of the Prince of Peace, I hope that we will be drawn more and more to find meaning, value and, above all, love in our life together, centered in worship, and extending energetically out into God's beloved world!

Early in January, with the strong support of our Church Council, I will be convening a Community Outreach Strategy "Supercommittee" to engage EVERYONE in the congregation who wants to help create a comprehensive strategy for building the membership of Grace over the next three to five years. One of the "pillars" of that strategy will be the renewal and even strengthening of Grace PreSchool, a gem in our community. Other important issues for the Supercommittee will be to look at our exterior and interior signage with an eye to optimizing our communication to the "outside world." This new group will also look at the feasibility of sponsoring regular events geared to families with young children AND a strategy of following up with participants, inviting them deeper into the life of the church. We will also ask ourselves if there are more ways in which our church can engage with the many non-members who use the park next door. The new Supercommittee is not intended to replace the work of our individual committees. It is intended to provide an opportunity for all of us to work together to make sure all the individual pieces of our life and ministry are working in the same direction: always more powerfully proclaiming God's love!

The work and recommendations coming out of the Community Outreach Supercommittee will be referred to the Church Council and ultimately to a special congregational meeting.

The first meeting of the Supercommittee will be in early January; the date has not yet been determined. I HOPE THAT IF YOU CARE ABOUT THE FUTRE OF GRACE'S MINISTRY, YOU WILL VOLUNTEER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE COMMUNITY OUTREACH SUPERCOMMITTEE!

In Christ's peace!

Pastor Dan Schwick

OPPORTUNITIES FOR *Worship*

Christmas Program: At the service on December 17, Sunday School children and youth in Confirmation and High School will present the story of Jesus' birth. Come and show your support for our children.

Christmas Eve Worship: On Sunday, December 24, we will have our regular 10am worship service. Then, celebrate the gift of hope in Christ's birth during a family service at 4:30pm and midnight celebration at 11:00pm. Both services will include Holy Communion and candle lighting. We plan to gather again for singing of carols 15 minutes before each service.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR *Fellowship*

Christmas Outing with Friends from Grace: On December 5, 2017 a group from Grace will attend the show "A CARPENTERS' CHRISTMAS" at the Metropolis Centre in Arlington Heights. Singer and playwright Lisa Rock and her 6 piece band are keeping The Carpenters' holiday traditions alive with spot-on renditions of their unforgettable Christmas tunes. The performance is at 3:00pm. If you're interested in attending please contact Pam Walger at 847-824-7408.

Mail Holiday Wishes: Share CHRISTMAS blessings by sending a card to those on our list of homebound members and "Just Because Friends" who will be cheered when receiving your greetings. An updated list of their names and addresses can be found on the poster with the tree on it in the atrium.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR *Learning*

Bible Study: Beginning on December 3 there will be a Sunday morning Bible Study at church at 9:00am. The focus of the Bible Study will be the Bible Passages that will be included in the worship service to follow. All are welcome!

Advent Bible Studies: A three-session Advent Bible Study will be offered on Wednesdays, December 6, 13 and 20 at 10:00am; or Thursdays, December 7, 14, 21 at 7:00pm. The focus of the Advent Bible Studies will be the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels. All are Welcome.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR *Service*

Volunteer to be a Eucharistic Minister (Home Communion Assistant): We hope to have several new volunteers to assist with our homebound ministry. Many of our members are unable to come to church regularly and would like to have communion brought to them. Would you like to see what this ministry involves? Please speak with Pam Walger or Pastor Dan about this opportunity. Pastor will meet with those who are interested for a training session where all of your questions can be answered.

Please save cans for this year's Luminaria: We need lots and lots and lots of small tuna, crab meat or cat food cans for this project. Place these clean and washed cans in the box provided in the atrium. EAT MORE TUNA! ADOPT A CAT! THANKS!

Offering Counters: A few new volunteers are wanted to become offering counters. Please consider being a part of a counter team. If you would like to volunteer or receive more information on the process please contact Jerry Sharlog at 847-253-0636.

Help Set Up the Christmas Poinsettia Garden on Saturday, December 16th at 9:00am. Question? Contact Betty Carlson at 847-803-9646.

Luminaria on Christmas Eve: Margit Willis would like several people to help her set up the Luminaria around the church parking lot on Christmas Eve at 3:00pm. If you are willing to help with this beautiful Christmas ministry please let Pam Walger or Margit Willis know. A volunteer may also be needed to re-light the candles prior to the 11:00pm service. Let us know!

The Altar Guild is in need of some helping hands, especially for December and January. Please speak with Betty Carlson at 847/803-9646. Your help will be greatly appreciated.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR *Outreach*

The Giving Tree: A Grace tradition of collecting Christmas gifts for children in need is continuing in 2017. Tags will be available starting Thanksgiving Eve. Gifts for children in School Districts 21 and 26 are due back at church by December 10th. Place the wrapped gifts under the tree in the east entryway.

Hats, mittens and gloves for all ages at La Trinidad will be collected on Sunday, December 10th. Place the unwrapped items under the tree in the east entryway. We will be delivering them to La Trinidad.

Mallternative 2017: A representative of the Social Ministry Committee will be taking orders on December 3rd and 10th. Order forms will be in the church bulletin. Please consider "shopping" generously.

Once again it is the holiday season which means it is time for Mallternative. The idea behind Mallternative is that the members of Grace Lutheran are blessed with an abundance of faith, good will and possessions. In other parts of the world one, two or all three of these are missing. Your gifts can help bridge that gap.

Your gifts helps to:

- bring farm animals to underdeveloped nations so that farmers and their families can increase their incomes;
- help children be healthy, well fed and ready to learn at school

What do you get out of it?

- The sense of satisfaction that comes from helping someone truly in need
- A card to give telling the recipient you are honoring them with a charitable gift

GIFTS TO HELP FARMERS:

- 10 chicks for \$10
- Fruit tree seedling \$10
- Hive of honey bees \$20
- Farming tools \$25
- Pig \$30
- Goat \$50

HELP FOR CHILDREN:

- Stock a child's backpack with food for the weekend \$10
- Vaccinations for a child \$30
- Solar powered lantern (for studying at night) \$30
- School fees and a school uniform for a girl \$40

GIFTS TO OFFER ASSISTANCE AFTER A DISASTER:

- Feed a refugee family for a week \$25
- Assistance to disaster survivors \$20
 - California wildfires
 - Hurricane Harvey (Texas)
 - Hurricane Irma (Florida)
 - Hurricane Maria (Puerto Rico)
 - Mexico City earthquake

Please Support La Trinidad in its efforts to serve the hungry. La Trinidad church in the Humboldt Park neighborhood serves a monthly meal to the community. Please consider donating money to help cover food expenses or donating sample sized toothpaste, shampoo and soap as well as toothbrushes. You are welcome to go along with the Social Ministry Committee and help serve the meal. Contact Libby Reimann for more information at 847-368-1663.

Refugee Ministry: Please consider changing the way you shop on Amazon to help RefugeeOne. Amazon has a website that donates a percentage of all purchases to the charity of your choice. It offers all the same products and you can still use Amazon Prime. Start by going to smile.amazon.com and picking RefugeeOne as your charity. Then, each time you shop at smile.amazon.com you will be supporting RefugeeOne. Thanks.

"Feed My Starving Children" – Our Next Opportunity: Our next chance to go as a group from Grace to the Schaumburg location of Feed My Starving Children, 1072 National Parkway, will be Tuesday, March 13, 2018, from 6pm. to 7:30pm. There are thirty-three spots reserved for our group.

Sign-up sheets will be available starting Sunday, February 25, 2018. But, if you want to reserve your spot right away, access the website www.fmssc.org and follow the prompts to “join” the group named Grace Lutheran Church (group leader Greg Linwood). Or, another way of volunteering now is to contact me directly, either at 847-502-7744, or via e-mail at gregorylinwood@sbcglobal.net, and I will add you to our group.

Thanks for your continuing enthusiastic support of this ministry!

WEBSITE *Update*

We have updated our website. The primary address for the website is www.gracemtprospect.org.

Our committee had several goals for the new site.

1. Make website easy to read on a cellphone or tablet
2. Connect website to Grace Theme – Experience God’s Amazing Grace
3. Target millennial audience
 - a. Use less words – more pictures/action words
4. Focus on reaching out to new members and less about providing info for current members
5. Make website updating as easy to use as Constant Contact
6. Go back to using www.gracemtprospect.org as main URL
 - a. Use CheckGrace.org only for special occasions/applications
7. Open to possibility of streaming worship service or viewing worship service later

These goals were established in March, with the support of the Council. Since then, we experienced several substantial changes.—

1. Pastor Munker accepted a different call and left Grace
2. We changed our worship services from 2 services to 1 service
3. Grace Preschool Director changed

All of these changes were significant and the need to update the information on the website as soon as possible is of paramount importance.

YOUTH GATHERING 2018

The Youth Group is busy working a variety of activities to raise funds for the trip to Houston next summer.

On November 4th, the Youth Group Families hosted a Craft/Vendor Fair. We had nearly 20 vendors at the show, some great food and scrumptious baked goods. **A big thank you** goes out to all that participated – craft/vendors, bakers and shoppers! The Youth Group was able to generate slightly more than \$1,800, which will go a long way towards getting our youth to Houston next summer.

Next up – Parent’s Night Out: The Youth team will be watching the younger children while their parents enjoy themselves for the evening. On Saturday, December 2nd, we will be staffing the church with several High School youth and their parents to watch, entertain and feed the younger children while their parents take the evening off! Maybe you want to do some Christmas Shopping, maybe you want a Date Night or maybe you just want to relax for an evening. For \$20 per child or \$30 per family, we will watch your kids from 6:00pm to 10:00pm. This event is not limited to our congregation, so parents feel free to extend this invitation to your friends and neighbors as well.

Annual Jayne Boom Cookie Walk: Baker’s get your cookie sheets ready! We would appreciate any fresh-baked goodies you could provide. On Sunday, December 17th, after the service, Charter Hall will be filled with an amazingly wide variety of yummy cookies. Grab a container, fill it with all of your favorites and even a few new choices. Make a Freewill offering and enjoy the cookies.

Luminaries: During the Christmas Eve Services luminaries (paper bags with lit candles) will flank the parking lot. You will have an opportunity to dedicate luminaries in memory of or in honor of loved ones. A sign-up sheet will be included in the bulletin in advance of the Christmas Eve Services. In the meantime, please continue to collect your tuna, chicken and cat food cans



The DeCarlos have gone to the birds! Please contact the church office to schedule a flamingo visit to one of your friends or family members.

FINANCIAL *Update*

Financial Report ending October 31, 2017

	Budget	Actual	Difference
Weekly Envelope Income	\$230,270	\$218,224	(\$ 12,046)
Special Income	26,700	34,328	+ 7,628
Prepaid Income	9,975	9,975	0
Total Income	\$266,945	\$262,527	(\$ 4,418)
Expenses thru October	276,576	240,395	
Surplus or (Deficit)		\$+22,132	

We are now fully staffed with the engagement of Erik as our full-time organist. The accumulated surplus is a good sign approaching the end of the year as we begin the budget process for next year. Income through October is ahead of last year at this time which is indicative of the additional support provided following the approval of a 2017 deficit budget. We thank you for your support through October and ask that you finish the year with the same effort.

Notes of THANKS

Dear Grace Lutheran Church: Thank You to Grace Lutheran Congregation for your many years of support for our LCC Food Pantry. Your food donations and the Aldi gift cards are all appreciated. You are truly a gift to our community's needy families.

Walker Reach, Director, Lutheran Church of the Cross Food Pantry

Thank You to the People of Grace Church:

Thank you for your many gracious words and generous (and unexpected) gift. Playing for your excellent and enthusiastic hymn-singing has been a joy.

Pastors and musicians may come and go, but surely a congregation so strongly unified in song may be considered securely grounded in the Source of all music – ready to serve the Master, come what may.

It was a privilege to be at Grace and I'll miss you all. God bless you!

Harriett (Mueller)

Dear Grace Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your gift of \$200.00 to Lutheran Disaster Response. With this gift you are providing emotional and spiritual care, supplying emergency relief, and addressing long-term recovery.

With your gifts you are making possible the support of unmet needs, the coordinating of volunteers in the United States through our local affiliates, and the promoting of disaster risk-reduction internationally, expanding knowledge and ability.

Thank you for this gift and all your faithful generous gifts. Thank you for encouraging others to learn, act, pray and give with you. Thank you for living into God's words of justice and mercy and for joining with the whole church to love and serve one another.

In God's grace, The Rev. Daniel Rift, Director, ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Appeal

Hi! My grandma Lois Hauge signed me up to receive the holiday care packages from the church! I just have to reach out and say thank you! I loved the goodies and it was such a fun surprise. Happy Holidays!

Amanda Bergren

Dear Grace Lutheran Church: Thank you so much for the delicious care package for Halloween. It's always such a great feeling to know that I am supported by Grace while I'm away at school. I look forward to being home for the holidays and seeing everyone at church. Thanks again!

Julie Josten

SPECIAL *Events*

- ***Hanging of the Greens:*** Saturday, December 2 at 9am
- ***Parent's Night Out:*** Saturday, December 2nd
- ***Bible Study:*** Sundays at 9am starting December 3, 2017
- ***Mallternative:*** Sundays, December 3rd and 10th after the service
- ***Advent Bible Studies:*** Wednesdays, December 6, 13, and 20
- ***La Trinidad Community Dinner:*** Sunday, December 17 leaving church at 9am
- ***Sunday School Christmas Program:*** Sunday, December 17 at the 10am Service
- ***Jayne Boom Cookie Walk:*** Sunday, December 17 after the service in Charter Hall
- ***Christmas Eve:*** Worship Services at 10am, 4:30pm and 11pm
- ***Downing of the Greens:*** Saturday, January 6 at 9am

CHILDREN'S *Ministry*



Rain prevented our bonfire, but not our fun! We played indoor games and then managed a night hike, in between rain drops, and finished up by roasting marshmallows for our s'mores over the stove!

Birthday LIST

December

2	Allison Gharagozlou	15	Harvey Willis Beth Jozefat
4	Nick Lovdjieff Linda Pettingill Carmen McKinstry Joanne Schulze	19	Sheila FencI Mark Loeb Jenna Lazzara Joseph Torres
6	Colton Kochanski	21	Ardell Mueller
8	Barb Carlson Lynda Weiss Daniel Garza	22	Carol Victor Kaitlin Eschbach
9	Brigitte Bierlich	23	Sandi Johnson Mike Pirron
10	Teddy Reimann	26	Holly Schirmer
13	Amy Pracko	28	Payton Chantyr
14	Kari Nickl Abigail Schaffer Jennifer Roth Luis Rosado	29	Veronica Grimpe James A. Schaffer
		31	Allison Eschbach





EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Experiencing God's Amazing Grace!

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Evangelical Lutheran Church
in America (ELCA)

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OUR *Mission AND Vision*

Our mission is to tell the good news of Jesus and touch people with his love.

Our vision is to joyfully praise and serve God, committed to being a church of friendship, openness and diversity.

Staff **DIRECTORY**

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ARTICLE *Deadline:* December 16