



HOLY COMMUNION OFFERED EVERY SUNDAY

# GraceGram

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH



OUR  
MISSION

Saved by Grace.  
Called to Worship.  
Sent to Serve.

## January 2017

INSIDE THIS EDITION

## From the Pastor's Desk

by Pastor Paul E. Kuhlman

### Happy New Year—Emphasis on ‘new’

Happy New Year, everyone! May it bring prosperity, health and success to each and every one of you! If you are glad 2016 is now behind you, may 2017 be an improvement.

I want to wish you a happy New Year, but with an emphasis on ‘new.’ 2017 is promising to bring all kinds of ‘newness’ to the life and mission of Grace. Our old worship, office and gathering space has been made new, and we hope to finish it off with new carpet. We might find ‘new’ doors for entering worship, a new cry room/overflow room, and who cannot see all the ‘new’ paint throughout the building? I also know that the council is pondering a new appearance in the parking lot in the spring. ‘New’ is the ‘new’ buzzword at Grace.

More importantly, 2017 also promises the beginning of the ministry of a new pastor at Grace. The Transition Team will begin deliberating, planning, and developing the formation of the Ministry Site Profile, the document we must be complete to help pastors in the call process view our congregation from afar. Once they complete their work, hopefully in March, the Call Committee will be formed by the Congregation Council and the process of interviewing and calling a pastor will begin in earnest. I hope and pray we can have a new pastor here by the fall or early winter. With a ‘new’ pastor at Grace, ‘NEW’ takes on a whole ‘new’ meaning.

- **Helping Grace Spend Wisely** pg 2
- **Family Promise of Barry County** pg 3
- **Puppets help us celebrate Reformation** pg 3
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- **January 2017 calendar** pg 7

**A Look @ Next Month – February 2017**  
**Theme: “Epiphany: Back to Green and Waiting on Spring”**

- *Transition Team – a work in progress*
- *Call Committee – how it works*
- *Mutual Ministry Committee – a new idea much needed*
- *Renovation Project – Stage 2*

*Deadline for inclusion in the February GraceGram is **January 17, 2017.***

*Send your articles to Victoria Alt at:  
[parishadmin@grace-hastings.org](mailto:parishadmin@grace-hastings.org)*

## On the Cover – A brief history lesson

by Pastor Paul

What a great move on the part of the members who planned the design of the church windows to include a bit of local history by having windows done of the previous and present church buildings. It was a great way to tie together the old and the new, history and the present.



The red building is the previous site of Grace Lutheran Church in downtown Hastings. It is still standing and is the home of another church family of a different denomination. But it still carries the memories of many church events and worship experiences of our community. The light brown building is the present worship facility, but without the steeple/bell tower. These two windows blend the history with the present life and ministry of Grace.

That will be the function of the Transition Team as well, as they begin their work in January. They will research the history of Grace and our members, as well as identify our present mission and ministry. And as our present church building is also our future, the Transition Team will begin helping the congregation identify some of the future ministries of Grace, as God leads us forward into a future grounded in Christ's mission in the world.

## Notes from the Veep

by Chris Bush

Greetings Grace Family, and blessings of good times, good health, and Good News to all this New Year!

Within the next couple of months, the Mission Endowment Fund Committee will meet and discern how we will distribute the earnings of the fund. We invite the congregation to make suggestions for ministries we can gift that are not already supported in our annual budget. Over the life of the fund, which was established in 2002, we have been able to provide more than \$29,000 to various ministries, including Green Gables, Habitat for Humanity, backpacks for local school children, several ELCA special fund drives, our Mission Disciple Trip, Glastonbury Hall, Blankets for Babies, and Barry Community Foundation. Reinvestment of 10% of the earnings, plus gifts given by members or their survivors, has allowed the principal to grow by \$14,000. Praise be to God for those who provided the seed money to establish this fund and for those who designated trusts and bequests toward the fund, so that more of God's work can be accomplished! You can designate a gift to the Mission Endowment Fund at any time. Why wait?

Have you decided to "Put Your Foot Down"? As Grace moves through the renovation phases, we are also planning on the finishing touch: new flooring. We have started looking at carpeting and other options that will complement the new look of our space. We've done a great job of managing costs with the construction and paint, but quality flooring, that looks good and stands up to big and little feet treading throughout the building, will not come cheap. The Fellowship Hall and most of the restrooms will keep the flooring they currently have, but the classrooms, offices, conference room, hallways, Welcoming Area (the narthex),

and the Worship Area (the sanctuary) are all on the docket for new flooring. We encourage the congregation to "put its foot down" and start contributing to the Flooring Fund now. Thank you for your support – in labor, prayer, and financial – as Grace gets renewed!

Lastly, I have heard from no one regarding my challenge last month to be the first person to let me know how many bylaws they found in our new constitution. The count will be revealed in next month's newsletter, but the reward (a container of honey, and no, it will not be in the form of baklava!) still awaits the curious and competitive....



## Helping Grace spend wisely

by Victoria Alt, Parish Administrator



Did you know that as a not-for-profit entity, Grace often qualifies to make tax exempt purchases for items used at the church?

Do you need to make a purchase for your committee? Check with the retailer you intend to use to find out if they allow tax exempt purchases. Then check with the office for the tax exempt number to use when making your purchase.

Grace already has tax exempt status at several businesses, so stop in at the church office or call to find out more.

## Family Promise of Barry County Speaker on January 29<sup>th</sup>

by Pastor Mike Kemper

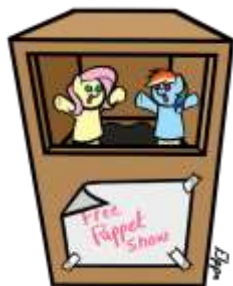
Family Promise of Barry County is a new homeless family ministry being developed for Barry County. This ecumenical ministry has been successful throughout the country and particularly in Grand Rapids in helping homeless families find more permanent housing coupled with employment enabling the families to sustain themselves and break the cycle of homelessness. The Grace Endowment Committee will be considering what level of financial support we may be able to commit ourselves to for a 3-5 year period and perhaps longer.

Our Community Outreach Committee has invited Mr. Stephen Larghi, director and developer of this ministry, to speak at our **worship services on January 29<sup>th</sup>**. He will also address an **adult forum at 9:30 AM that Sunday** which will allow those attending to ask questions and hear more details on the successes and challenges this important ministry experiences. We invite you to make plans to hear Mr. Larghi's presentation on what has the potential to be a life-changing ministry for homeless families in Barry County.

## Puppets Help Us Celebrate 500 Years of the Reformation!

by Chris Bush

The Middle School Faith-Building Group is learning about the roots of Lutheranism and will share their perspective in puppet plays with the theme, "What Does This Mean?" (Remember that question from Luther's Small Catechism?) The first puppet play will be given as the Children's Message at worship on Sunday, January 29<sup>th</sup>. The remaining plays will be in March and May, with the grand finale next October on Reformation Sunday, when we commemorate the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Martin Luther nailing those 95 theses to the Wittenberg chapel door. While the puppets may sometimes tickle your funny bone, they are a great way of learning, or re-learning, key stories and key concepts of our faith.



## Devotional Booklets for the Season of Lent

by Pastor Mike Kemper

The Community Outreach Committee is planning to assemble a devotional booklet with daily devotional messages written by our members. This requires a good amount of lead time to accomplish. A display listing scriptural texts for the 40 days of Lent is posted in the gathering area where members can sign up and choose their devotional texts and dates. Information is also available on the sign-up board with instructions on how to write and submit your devotional(s). Feel free to write more than one devotional if you so choose. We would like to have all **devotional submissions returned by Sunday, Feb. 5** in order to leave enough time for final printing and **distribution on Sunday, February 26**. Please consider being a part of this meaningful Lenten tradition that will help us all focus on the meaning of the season of Lent. If you have questions please feel free to speak with Mike Kemper, chairperson of our Community Outreach Committee.



## Thank you!

**Many Holly Trolley Volunteers, singers and cookie makers**, especially Mark Bishop for setting up, preparing the hot chocolate and taking everything down again on a "cold winter's night."

**Youth Christmas Parade float volunteers**—those who helped build it and those who walked along side throughout the parade.

**Renovation Project**—painters and those who helped clean up all the dust this past month.



# Reformation Memories –

by Pastor Paul



Luther's attack of indulgences and papal abuses, begun with the nailing of the 95 Theses on the door of the church of Wittenberg, was met with opposition in a now familiar pattern, from 1517 to 1520. Throughout the Middle Ages, when the church confronted opposition from radical personalities, mostly theologians, the ruling class first tried to argue and persuade the opposition to change. When that did not work, they followed up with political and religious measures. Finally, if the opposition was still persistent, the powerful resorted to violence and force.

Persuasion and argument came immediately from several sectors of the church. On the one hand, Johann Eck, Luther's first opponent, continued to challenge Luther throughout his career, well into the 1540's. Luther never saw Eck as a significant challenge. Luther's first great theological challenge came from Thomas Cardinal Cajetan, a prominent and highly respected Dominican theologian from Rome. They met in a town not far from where a previous radical was eventually burned at the stake, John Hus, to whom Luther was often compared.

In spite of all the opposition, Luther also found support, especially in Wittenberg. Philip Melanchton, an incredibly young systematic theologian was added to the faculty of the university in Wittenberg, and the two very quickly became close friends, though they had many differences. During these years Luther also gained the active support of Nicholas von Amsdorf (who later became bishop of Magdeburg), Johann Agricola (who later opposed Luther when he lost an appointment to the theological faculty of Wittenberg to Melanchton), John Bugenhagen (who later carried the reformation to the Church of Denmark), and Justus Jones (a significant Reformation hymn writer).

During the years 1517-1520, Luther refined and expanded his theology through preaching, teaching, and writing tracts that addressed issues which he felt were important. The printing press allowed his writings to be read in Germany and throughout the empire. James Nestingen, in his book, *Martin Luther: A Life*, states that in the 1520's nearly three-quarters of the material in print was written by Luther. In 1520, Luther writes three of his most important treatises, *Two Kinds of Righteousness*, *To the German Nobility*, and *The Babylonian Captivity*, dealing with such diverse topics as sacraments and penance, the role of political powers, and renewing the church.

Since persuasion and criticism of Luther did not bring about the desired change, the powers that be resorted to institutional and political methods. The Pope responded first with the bulls *Exsurge Domine* and *Decet Romanum*,

which excommunicated Luther, putting him outside the church and open to political and legal abuses. Though he was protected by Frederick the Wise, the ruler of this part of Germany, his constant opposition to the abuses of the church put the empire at risk, at a time when the emperor could not permit disunity and opposition. Therefore, Luther found himself threatened as well by the power and force of the young, newly crowned, emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Charles V.

The forces of opposition to Luther coalesced by calling for a diet or conference to meet at Worms in April, 1521. They would Luther if he accepted everything he had written or if he would recant his opposition to the papacy and the church. Luther was granted "safe conduct" by the emperor, and Frederick the Wise felt he could keep Luther safe. It took two weeks of travel by wagon to cross Germany, and all along the way Luther was met with strong support from the German masses as preached at churches and monasteries.

Luther arrived in Worms to a throng of supporters. The son of a miner, member of the humble Augustinian order, dressed in the black of the order, Luther was asked if the stack of books on the table before him were his. In the midst of the royalty and pomp of political and religious leaders, he was asked whether he agreed with all he wrote or whether he recanted his opposition to the Pope. He asked and was granted 24 hours to consider his response. When he returned the next day, in a soft voice he said that much of the writings were from scripture, and he could not recant those. Some things he wrote found agreement among church officials, surely he could not recant those things either. Finally, he was asked to answer without "horns or teeth." Luther's now famous response has been written into history and was met with an uproar when he concluded:

"Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scripture or by clear reason..., I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted, and my conscience is captive to the word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. May God help me. Amen."

Luther was quickly led out of Worms, but along the way a group of horsemen kidnapped Luther. He disappeared on May 3, 1521 and no one knew where he could be found. Charles V followed the Diet of Worms with the Edict of Worms, condemning Luther an outlaw and the same to anyone who helped him in any way. The story could have Ended here, but God has a way of "bringing low the powerful."

# How Well Do You Know the Reformation?

by Pastor Paul

Following a suggestion by the Worship Committee, I will run a brief “test” of your knowledge of the Reformation. There will be ten questions each month that are to be answered “true” or “false.”

1. T or F The Edict of Worms gave Luther safe passage throughout the empire.
2. T or F *The Babylonian Captivity* is one of Luther’s more memorable and important writings of 1520.
3. T or F Luther finally had to recant his opposition to the Pope in order to save his life.
4. T or F *Decet Romanum* was the Pope’s document the finally excommunicated Luther.
5. T or F Luther never had the support of the German people.
6. T or F Black was the color of a monk’s clothing in the Augustinian order.
7. T or F Charles V, the Holy Roman emperor, opposed Luther because he threatened the unity of the empire at a critical time in history.
8. T or F Luther was compared to John Hus, a Slovak reformer who was burned at the stake.
9. T or F The Diet of Worms was a gathering of political leaders wanting to lose weight.
10. T or F John Budenhagen is well known for taking the Reformation to Sweden.

Answers appear on page 6.

TRUE  
 FALSE

# Sunday Adult Forums Two to Choose From

by Pastor Paul

The Small Group Ministries Committee is excited to have two Adult Sunday Forums offered at the same time. During the time between the two Sunday Services, from 9:30 to 10:30, Pastor Mike Kemper is offering an excellent look at the Psalms in the Conference Room. At the same, in the new classroom, Pastor Paul is leading a discussion on Luther’s Small Catechism. It is not too late, in fact it is never too late, to join either of these two classes.

You say you come to the second service? No problem! Just come about an hour ahead of the service and participate in one of the two Adult Forums offered for your Christian learning and faith-building. Besides, you will be part of a group of other Grace members and you will have the opportunity to learn from them also, and to affirm new relationships. What a wonderful opportunity this offers the members of Grace!

## January Birthdays

1-4 Randy Hughes, Diane Alleva-Davis  
1-6 Jerry Knickerbocker  
1-7 Jeannette Ulrich  
1-11 Alicia Davis, Clyde Watson  
1-13 Carl Schoessel, Rod Bowman  
1-14 Dollie Larsen, Dean Rounds,  
Christina Pontius  
1-15 Jennifer Rosenberger  
1-18 Mary Kuhlman  
1-20 Rick Duits  
1-21 Ethan Reid  
1-22 Steve Kaiser, Logan Clements  
1-23 Lacie Hughes  
1-25 Allison Neeb  
1-26 Sheryl Gorden  
1-30 Jane Power

## January Anniversaries

1-5 John & Mary Kleinbrink  
1-26 Shirley & John Smith

# Messy Self

by Jenn Rosenberger

One the frenzy of Christmas day has passed, and we set our sights on the New Year, we often think about resolutions for change. If we separate New Year's from Christmas, however, that separation can make us miss some of the truer meaning of Christmas.

Sometimes, without warning I have to bring my messiest self out into the world. It is uncomfortable and sometimes dark to brave that truth; I wonder how many others have this happen but don't search further than the 'ick' feeling of revealing their true self. I have experienced some hurts in my life that damaged me and my path, just like everyone else. One result of my journey is that I struggle to say exactly what I need. Mostly I struggle with finding the right words for what I need or don't need. Sometimes it just feels all too much like I am confessing the truth of the hurt again. Fortunately, my spouse has often found the grace to understand why I can't say the words and to just read past the point a bit and see what I need. I try very hard to extend this grace to others, too. However, when I fail, I feel like I have not only let them down, but I have let myself down, too. Then I have to acknowledge another part of my messy self: I am a work in progress and I cannot be perfect.



Christmas is an amazing time of year to remember that we cannot be perfect. Jesus came to Earth, and He was perfection in human form. It is said "God so loved the world He gave his only Son." Did God see how broken and damaged we all were as people and know He could no longer heal us just from Heaven, but needed to send extra love on Earth for us? Did He read past the point of what we were saying and send Jesus down in anticipation of our true need? With Jesus, we are still messy people, but we have a way to find light again. We also can see that we NEVER have to be perfect, because the only perfect person already came. We are called only to be a work in progress, to be willing to be led, and to follow. It is hard for me not to feel the weight of the world sometimes, but I remind myself that it is okay to be a work in progress. I remind myself that I am forgiven by the one that is perfect. I can always try again tomorrow to strive for better.

Every New Year we make resolutions and we forget Christmas was the week preceding it. We make lofty promises and trip over our feet to make them happen. This year my dear church family, I urge you to pray about those resolutions and see where God wants to work in your heart. Then you can see where God needs to come in and make the most change. Not to make you perfect, but to make progress and keep you moldable towards being a true follower. Keep your heart open to what happens over the

next few days and see where your messy self appears. When there might be a lot of movement going on around you, look for a moment of calm. See the messy and embrace it because there is where you see your true self. Your true self is the one that will show you where your heart can open and be changed with the light of God.

## Answers to questions on page 5 How Well Do You Know the Reformation?

1. False The Edict of Worms made Luther an outlaw.
2. True The Babylonian Captivity is one of Luther's more memorable and important writings of 1520.
3. False Luther never recanted and his life was always at risk.
4. True *Decet Romanum* was the Pope's pressure to try and bring Luther to his knees.
5. False In the early years of Luther's opposition to Roman he had strong support of the German people.
6. True Black was the color of the Augustinian order, as white was the Dominican color.
7. True Charles V, the Holy Roman emperor, was not a very religious guy, but he saw Luther's opposition to the church as a threat to the unity of the empire, just as they face possible invasion from the Turks.
8. True Luther was compared to John Hus, a Slovak reformer who was burned at the stake. Luther agreed with much of Hus' criticism of the church.
9. False The Diet of Worms was a gathering to confront Luther's rebellion. But it was also a rowdy and raucous gathering of political and church leaders at the time.
10. False John Budenhagen is well known for taking the Reformation to Denmark, not Sweden. The great Swedish reformer was Olaus Petri.



# Grace Lutheran Church

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## Our Staff:

Pastor: *Paul Kuhlman*  
[gracehastingspastor@gmail.com](mailto:gracehastingspastor@gmail.com)

Parish Admin: *Victoria Alt*  
[ParishAdmin@grace-hastings.org](mailto:ParishAdmin@grace-hastings.org)  
Mon – Thurs 8 AM - 3PM

Minister of Music: *Cindy Olson*

Choir Accompanists:

*Marcia Bowman, Chris Bush*

Bell Choir Director: *Kim Domke*

Custodian: *Nathan Freedlund*

Organist Emeritus: *Donna Buehl*



## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

### Regular

(1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Labor Day - May)  
Sundays @ 8:00 & 10:45 a.m.

### Summer

(June – Labor Day)  
Sundays @ 8:00 & 10:00 a.m.

### 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays

Sunday @ 10:00am

### Advent and Lent

Wednesdays @ 7:00 p.m.

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## Children's Church

### Winter

(1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Labor Day – May)  
10:45 AM

### 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays

Sunday @ 8:45 am



**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

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## Executive Committee:

President: *Doug Neeb*

Vice President: *Chris Bush*

Secretary: *Kate Watson*

Treasurer: *Randy Teegardin*

## Church Council Members/Liasons

*Cherie Clements – Small Group Ministry*

*Margaret Wood – Congregational Care*

*Phil Poholski – Property Committee*

*Kay Howell – Community Outreach*

*Diane Neeb – Social Activities*

*Tim Schoessel - Stewardship*

*Jana Bishop – Children/Youth Ministry*

*Open – Worship Committee*