



HOLY COMMUNION OFFERED EVERY SUNDAY

GRACEGRAM

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH



OUR
MISSION

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

December 2015

INSIDE THIS EDITION

From the Pastor's Desk Best Christmas Wishes to All

by Pastor Paul E. Kuhlman

I can't believe that we are nearing the Christmas season! I was assigned here by the bishop back in mid-May; seven months have already flown by and we are planning the celebration of the birth of our Lord. Deep winter is at hand, the days are short, the nights are long, and I find myself wanting to sit down every evening in front of a puzzle, sipping tea and honey.

I'm grateful for the months of service and ministry we have experienced these many months together. While anxious about all of the "newness" of a new pastor, you have been willing to walk in a new direction and I see "renewed" hope and promise.

That is what Christmas means for the church. The birth of Jesus promised something completely new, transformational. The singing of the angels announcing the birth should inspire us to sing with the same joy—change is coming. The shepherds "left their flocks" to visit the child and trust the promise of the angels. We need to be willing to make such changes in our lives as well—leaving behind the familiar and claiming the new.

Mary and I would like to wish you all, in this season of darkness and cold, the promise of joy and peace, the promise of new beginnings and hope that can only come through the true and eternal gift of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. May your celebrations fill not only your hearts, but the hearts of all whom you touch with the Good News of the child of God born to us on Christmas Day.

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A Look @ Next Month—January, 2016

Theme: Forging a New Beginning

- Time to Think Transition Team
- Update: New Website
- Living Liturgy—Green in the Middle of Winter

*Deadline for inclusion in the January Gracegram is **December 17, 2015***

Send your articles to Victoria Alt at: parishadmin@grace-hastings.org

Living Liturgy — Advent: A Time of Hope-full Expectations

by Pastor Paul

I cannot think of a season of the church year so misunderstood and unappreciated as the season of Advent. Traditionally we would sing only Advent hymns and review texts that speak in a language of expectation and promise. Most of us do not appreciate the melody style of Advent hymns, and we listen to Christmas carols and commercials all day long on the radio, in the malls, and on television. We are not willing during this season to wait and watch. We want to jump into Christmas cookies, Christmas parties, “Deck the Halls...” and light the colored lights. What is there to wait for?

I remember being so frustrated with the cultural push to celebrate Christmas one year that I changed the whole season. The Sundays of Advent became “The Sundays BEFORE Christmas.” We sang Advent hymns on Advent 1 only, but sang the carols as early as three weeks before Christmas. By the time Christmas was over people were asking, “Why did we skip Advent?” What is the nature of Advent? Is it still possible to experience Advent in a culture that commercializes Christmas months in advance? Can the church ever come to appreciate Advent today?

So what is this Advent season all about? Wikipedia—though I ordinarily do not refer to them—has written a decent article on Advent that I would encourage you to read. Here is the first part:

Advent is a season observed in many Western Christian churches as a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas. The term is an anglicized version of the Latin word *adventus*, meaning "coming".

Latin *adventus* is the translation of the Greek word *parousia*, commonly used to refer to the Second Coming of Christ. For Christians, the season of Advent anticipates the coming of Christ from two different perspectives. The season offers the opportunity to share in the ancient longing for the coming of the Messiah, and to be alert for his Second Coming.

Advent is the beginning of the Western liturgical year and commences on the fourth Sunday before Christmas in the Roman Rite of the Catholic Church, and in the Lutheran calendars.

Everything about Advent—texts, hymns, and practices—prepare the believers to patiently and hopefully await the coming of Jesus—his birth celebration and his second coming. For too many believers, we see it only as a time to anticipate the celebration of Christmas. The church is hopeful because we know that God sent His Son to us as a child, a fulfillment of a promise. We are expectant, nonetheless, because we know that Jesus is coming back to establish God’s kingdom and set all things under God’s authority and rule. This kind of expectation we cannot rush, for God’s rule will come when God chooses to do so.

Therefore, our Advent experience cannot be rushed. We need to learn to “wait” and “anticipate.” This is a time to remember the promises of God in Christ Jesus, develop the gift of patience, and to go about our business with the confidence that all things are moving to the day of Christ’s return.

Congregation Council – October meeting summary

by Kate Watson

The Grace Congregation Council (GCC) met on October 27th. GCC is excited to move forward with a re-build of the church’s website: Pixelvine Web’s proposal for a GLC website overhaul was accepted. A clean-out of the library (conference room) was also approved. Books will be put on tables for two weeks for GLC members to claim prior to being donated to the public library. GCC is moving forward with a proposal to try coffee hour in the narthex again. We think this will improve our likelihood of welcoming and fellowshiping, especially with visitors. The conference

room/library will be available for seating as well as some seating that will be brought in to the narthex.

The Stewardship committee has proposed a scholarship fund for members pursuing college or a trade school. GCC approved a letter of thanks to Linda Trongo, who has resigned as GLC Financial Coordinator as of Oct 31. The membership resignation of Bryan and Paula Allerdig was accepted with regret. Pastor Paul was presented with a card of thanks and Olive Garden gift card in honor of Pastor Appreciation Month.

Full GCC meeting minutes are available at www.grace-hastings.org as well as in the church office.

President's Perspective

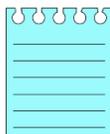
by Doug Neeb

The last few months have given me a new perspective of the job of Council President. I have learned a new respect for the people who have served before me. There are many things that require attention, so many, that sometimes you start to become overwhelmed. I find that the ability to focus and plan are important to stay on task. Important gifts that God has given me, honed and polished through my life's experiences.

Last week in Pastor Paul's bible study class on the book of John we studied the story about the Samaritan woman who met Jesus at the well (John 4: 1-42) and how her eyes were opened to see Jesus. It became apparent to me that it was at first, difficult for the Samaritan woman to see Jesus as she was focused on her daily task and her life's experiences had colored her vision. I wonder how much Jesus has to show me, that I have missed, as I focus on the daily duties I have. I would like to encourage you along with me to take the time to change what you focus on, and focus on what Jesus has to say, to you and to us here in Hastings, Michigan.

Notes from the Veep

by Chris Bush



We could probably all agree that this is a busy time of year. For some, as the calendar year winds down, we reflect on how we can approach life differently next year. Ah, those New Year's resolutions. I realized a long time ago that I did not have the discipline to stick to my self-improvement list. Instead, I have learned to strive on a daily basis to make myself a better person and disciple. God has placed people in my life who have inspired me in this ongoing task and impacted my faith life. This December, I look forward to Jesus's presence in the manger and in this congregation.

Word Watchers – a different look at the Book of

by Pastor Paul



The writer of Revelation uses an apocalyptic method for writing his book that utilizes symbolic language in order to convey his philosophy of history. The writer's fundamental principle is his profound faith in God and his righteous government and in "the ultimate triumph of the cause of Christ." I hope this description does not chase you away. Let me put it more simply:

The Christians were in an alien and hostile environment, and many felt that the church and all it stood

for was on the verge of being crushed and destroyed. John, however, looks beyond the borders of the visible. He lifts the veil that obscures the spiritual or deeper vision. As the church sounds the voices of fear, John sounds the clear note of confidence and victory. The Golden Age is not in the past, but is yet to come, and John points to that age. The writer is unable to unveil the whole plan, but he is able to reveal enough that it can give hope to the hopeless. He wants his readers not to look at where they have been, but where they are going—look ahead. Optimism, optimism, optimism!!! The Church might be in the wilderness and it may be evening, but we look for the morning, the morning of the eternal day.

If the Book of Revelation intrigues you, then join the Wednesday Word Watchers for a study that will change your whole understanding and appreciation for this mysterious and sometimes confusing book of the New Testament. The Word Watchers meet every Wednesday morning at 10:00 am in the Library of the church, and the study of Revelation is about to begin.

Education News

by Lorraine Freedlund



"The Colors of Christmas" program will take place on Sunday, December 13th at 10:00 am. There will be **one** service with a potluck and Jesus' birthday party following the program in the fellowship hall.

The bell choir will ring seasonal music at 9:30am in the sanctuary. All Grace youth, adults, and their family and friends are welcomed to join the celebration.

The education committee is still looking for "helping hands" to implement the suggestions given by the faith building, brain-storming group. Educating our youth and adults requires a team approach. Please consider joining the team.

Evangelism News

by Bill Freedlund

The Evangelism (Outreach) committee meets monthly to discuss new and old ideas. We will begin the discussion of Living Lutheran by Dave Daubert at the next meeting. Please watch for the date of the next meeting. If you are interested in this discussion on outreach you are very welcome to attend the first part of the meeting. The committee will be looking at the new dynamics for the church in today's world.

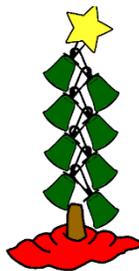
Holly Trolley Is Coming !!!

Get ready for the Holly Trolley! This annual event will take place on Friday evening, December 4 from 6:00 pm. – 7:30 pm. Please consider taking part in this fun filled evening at

the courthouse trolley stop. We always have room for more Christmas carolers and greeters. Dress for cold weather! Carolers need to bring a flashlight. We are looking forward to meeting people and sharing those delicious cookies along with information about Grace Lutheran.

Community Christmas Baskets

This year Grace has the names of 6 families for the Christmas Basket Program. Grace members have been donating food by the entrance door all through November. Food items should be at the church by December 7th. We will need help with delivering baskets on Saturday December 19. We also need a few people to help pack the food during the week of December 14. If you are purchasing gifts for a child please have the wrapped gift at the church by Sunday, December 14. Thanks for all your help during this Christmas season!!



Handbell News

by Kim Domke

3 opportunities to hear handbells

Sunday, Dec. 13 beginning at 9:30a.m., the bells will ring for preservice music and during the 10:00 service. This is Grace's Christmas Program Sunday and there will be extra worship music this day. A Birthday Celebration for Jesus is planned after service. All are welcome to come and fellowship and eat together.

Wednesday, Dec. 16 beginning at 6:50p.m., the bells will begin the Advent service with some carols in which the congregation is invited to sing along.

Thursday, Dec. 17 beginning at 5:45p.m. at the Hastings Community Enrichment Center (Old Presbyterian Church) 231 South Broadway Hastings. The Clapper Kids will be ringing for the Kinship Care group, but visitors are welcome to come listen and sing along.

Worship News

by Lorie Gladyness

Advent Services

Advent a time of expectant waiting.... Advent Services will be held Wednesday December 2nd, 9th and 16th. We will be using Holden's Evening Prayer's liturgy. The theme for Advent is Old World Hymns of Advent. Join us for dinner at 6 pm and worship service at 7 pm

On 12/2 dinner will be prepared by Brothers of Grace and the Advent Hymn is "Lost in the Night" (ELW #243)

On 12/9 dinner will be prepared by the Kuhlman and Gladyness family and the Advent Hymn is "People Look

East" (ELW #248). We will be joined by Bishop Craig Satterlee.

On 12/16 dinner will be prepared by The Worship Committee and the Advent Hymn is "Blessed by the God of Israel" (ELW #250).

Christmas Eve

Come join us December 24th at 7 p.m. for our Christmas Eve Service. We will be holding one service to celebrate the birth of the Messiah. Due to declining attendance we will not be holding an 11:00 p.m. service. As we gather with our families to celebrate the Christmas season come join your faith family to celebrate our Savior's birth.

*Silent night, holy night!
Son of God love's pure light.
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth*



Grace's High School Youth

by Joe Longcor and Gwen Hansen

A few youth met on November 1st and shared a discussion about individuals with disabilities, bullying, and acceptance. We focused on two individuals with Tourettes Syndrome:

- Stuart Ellis-Myers, a well-achieved 56 year-old consultant for major corporations...who states "If I can overcome everything...wild twitches, exhaustion, attempted suicide...and go on to build a life of personal and professional success...what is stopping you?"

<http://www.itwitch.com/about-twitchy>

- Jamie Grace, an accomplished 22 year-old female christian artist. Has a wonderfully powerful song titled "It's a Beautiful Day" found at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPy0ctqMwE0> She has many other insightful, faithful, and enlightening songs for teens...of all ages

Both have exceptional stories of persistence, courage, and faith in their own ways.

Four high-school youth joined 30+ other volunteers to help make pasties on November 7. Great to have these young, energetic and questioning minds join for the fellowship and fun...looks like we may have some real good future potato peeling, pasting filling, hot pasty transferring talent.

The Gathering in Lansing, MI - December 27-30...

Looks like there will be 6 or 7 high school youth attending the Lansing Gathering for fellowship, praise, singing, prayerful time, community service work, devotionals

annnnnnnd...recreation time to further build lasting relationships with other young people of faith. Gwen and Joe will be chaperones. This is an outstanding opportunity for our high school youth to shape their faith paths...please keep all in your prayers.

Peace and God's blessings to each of you for your continued support.

Words from Bishop Satterlee – Propping up Stones

by The Rev. Craig Alan Satterlee, Ph.D., Bishop



“As [Jesus] came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!’ Then Jesus asked him, ‘Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.’” (Mark 13:1-2) Scholars tell us that this prediction concerns the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, when Roman legions attacked its underlying supports in such a way that the entire structure collapsed and many of its stones were crushed. What if Jesus was speaking of more than that temple? What if Jesus was speaking of all the structures of power—particularly religious power and institutions—that he came to transform?

Thomas H. Troeger invites us to see the Church as an edifice of thought and belief that is marked by an unmistakable incompleteness.¹ The church’s walls are still standing and its space remains defined, but there is a hole in the ceiling above the altar where a mosaic of the Almighty used to be. This “God shaped hole” serves as Troeger’s poetic expression of the church’s loss of commanding certitude about God. Troeger challenges us to bear witness to God with an imaginative power that vitalizes faith and ministry as Christians and congregations reconstruct their understanding of belief, worship, and ministry.² In order to do this, we open ourselves up to Scripture as the “visions and voices of the cloud of witnesses borne by the wind of the Spirit that will guide us ‘into all the truth’”³ These witnesses remind us that ours is not the first age in which the Church’s dome of meaning has collapsed. Whenever this happened, the Spirit stirred God’s people to a more expansive understanding of God. That new image dominated the Church’s dome of meaning until it also crumbled and the Spirit has blown yet again. Troeger writes, “We have a technical term for people who do not change: dead. If Christ has not changed since the resurrection, then Christ is no longer alive.”⁴

Yet, grappling with resurrection brings sorrow, because it means acknowledging the loss of things once held sacred. Following Troeger’s metaphor, though the Spirit provides a

new, more expansive image of God to replace the Church’s cherished image of God that is crumbling, this new image of God, which brings the Church’s resurrection, is terrifying before it is empowering because resurrection gives more freedom to Christ than most believers want their Savior to have.⁵ Stated simply, the church has the opportunity to embrace Christ’s resurrection as new life, rather than as a return to or an improvement of the old. This makes sharing in Christ’s resurrection frightening, because participating in Christ’s resurrection means letting go of the old.

- Christ’s resurrection opens astonishing possibilities when we give up the delusion that we control reality.
- Resurrection is the vital ministry that results when a church releases its obsession with doing things as they always have.
- Resurrection is the vision of Christ that is granted us when we release the images we cling to in order to preserve what we hold dear and to feel secure.⁶

When I was a seminary professor, I heard a lot from preaching students who, quoting Dietrich Bonhoeffer, did not want to make grace cheap. Grace is not cheap; grace is free. Resurrection, on the other hand, is costly. Resurrection is hard. “Do you see these great buildings?” Jesus asks. “Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.” It occurs to me that this is as much Jesus’ pronouncement on our institutional “churchy context” as it was the Jerusalem Temple.

As I consider the church’s future, I am mindful of some advice given by a Pharisee named Gamaliel: “If this plan or this undertaking is of human origin, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them—in that case you may even be found fighting against God!” (Acts 5:34-39) I fear wasting the privilege of and opportunity to proclaim Christ to a world that needs him by spending our lives trying to prop up stones that God has destined to fall.

Like many pastors, leaders, and congregants, I am terrified by the new thing God is doing, the new life that God is bringing, because it means that my life and ministry will change. I will undoubtedly need to deny myself, take up my cross, and follow Jesus. But the gospel promises that the Reign of God is at hand and resurrection is coming.

Trusting this promise compels me—compels us—to claim our changing church not as an institutional crisis to be solved but as an urgent opportunity to proclaim Christ.

¹ This summary of Troeger’s work is taken from Craig A. Satterlee, *When God Speaks Through Change: Preaching in Times of Congregational Transition*, (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2005), p. 17.

² Thomas H. Troeger, *Preaching While the Church is Under Reconstruction: The Visionary Role of Preachers in a Fragmented World* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), p. 15.

Participation Cards Coming in December

Another Way to Reach Out and Care

by Pastor Paul

The Congregational Care Committee is always concerned about the pastoral needs of the congregational members. Often times, those needs are expressed after the member's absence in worship, or if the assigned shepherd gets wind of a concern. Even more importantly, as a congregation we have not been very successful in obtaining much needed information of our visitors on Sunday morning. So, to improve on these two concerns, the Congregational Care Committee has decided to include a weekly "Participation Card" in the bulletin. Everyone at worship is encouraged to fill it out and place it in the offering plate every Sunday morning. The Evangelism Committee supports this change.

Again, the purpose for this card is two-fold: 1) to help the Congregational Care Committee determine who has not been in worship so that they can respond to any needs those members might have (illness, pastoral concerns, etc); and 2) to gather information on our visitors so that we can stay in touch with them and invite them to return. Members are encouraged to complete the form, and in so doing, visitors are encouraged to do the same.

So, completing the Participation Card accomplishes two very important functions of the Body of Christ: identify members who might need our help or encouragement, and evangelism—identifying our visitors and obtaining information that will help us continue to welcome them. These are tasks the "whole" church can and must be a part of. And all you have to do is fill out your Participation Card. *A small thing to do for such a big return!*

Conference Room/Library

A Remake & Free Books

by Pastor Paul

Finally, several volunteers are going to downsize our library and decide what needs to stay and what needs to go. As this newsletter is being written, and with the blessing of the Congregation Council, people are in the Conference Room. Some things in the room will find a new home, like the papers that tell the history of this congregation. Some things are no longer needed or no longer relevant to the mission and ministry of Grace (or any other church for that matter).

Do not worry, however, about the books. Those we do not wish to keep will be placed on tables in the entrance

area for members to browse and select to take home for keeps (no "take-backs, please). The book tables will be up for congregational viewing and selection for two weeks, and then the books that remain will be presented to the local library for their book sales and/or use.

Plans are to spruce the place up, maybe adding a fresh coat of paint to make the Conference Room a fun place to meet with a fresh appearance. The Conference Room may be the first of a general "facelift" needed throughout the building, and we hope to do it with a very, very minimal cost to the congregation.



Advent Wednesday Services Old World Hymns of Advent

by Pastor Paul

December 2: Finnish folk tune

Theme Hymn: "Lost in the Night" (ELW #243)

Preacher: Pastor Paul

Reading(s): Matthew 25:1-12

Dinner Plans: Brothers of Grace

December 9: French carol

Theme Hymn: "People Look East" (ELW #248)

Preacher: Bishop Satterlee

Reading(s): Matthew 24: 23-27

Dinner Plans: Gladyness's and Kuhlman's

December 16: English folk tune

Theme Hymn: "Blessed Be the God of Israel" (ELW #250)

Preacher: Pastor Paul

Reading(s): Luke 1:68-79

Dinner Plans: Worship Committee

A Freewill Offering will be collected at the serving table to help defray the cost of the meal and to support TBD.



Website Update - A New Look!

by Pastor Paul

Grace Lutheran's website (*discover-grace.org* and *grace-hastings.org*) is in for a facelift! At a recent Congregation Council meeting, the members expressed a strong desire to upgrade our website because most agreed that it is the most promising way people outside of Grace can meet us. Technology can be used for outreach/evangelism.

Pastor Paul has begun a dialogue with Pixelvine Studios to begin the process of improving our website and bringing it into the 21st century. Pixelvine is a local company that specializes in web design and maintenance. They have already begun the building process and their photographer will soon appear on a Sunday to take several photos that will highlight our website. Pastor Paul hopes to have the new sight up and working in January, 2016.

There are some key questions about the purpose and function of the website that still need to be considered and answered. A Communication Committee will need to be established to coordinate and improve all the communication tools used at Grace (newsletter, Facebook, website and more). If you would like to be a part of this committee, contact the president, Doub Neeb or Pastor Paul.

If you want more information on the new design, or you would like to help with the designing process, please talk to Pastor Paul as soon as you can. We want this new site to be attractive, useful, and a powerful introduction to the heart and ministry of Grace Lutheran Church.

Brothers of Grace

by Joe Longcor

Grace Deeds Done Dirt Cheap (GDDDC)-

The Brothers of Grace (BOG) would like to share and remind the Grace family we are willing to help with small repair or fix-it jobs around the house or clean-up in the yard. Whether you're older, have health needs or other reasons, let us know and we'll see how we may help out. We are a small group but certainly can tap into other fellows with talents and a desire to share in God's work. If the job is too big or outta our league...we'll let you know.

We are especially interested and concerned about helping anyone that may need fire alarms checked, tested and/or batteries replaced. Feel free to call Joe Longcor at 269-623-2348 if you have a request. Joe will check with other Grace brothers and members about the request(s).

The Brothers will meet on December 2nd at Kloosterman's restaurant in Hastings for a meal. We'll show up about 6 p.m. and plan to order by 6:30 p.m. This is a casual evening as we "break bread" together and fellowship. All Grace men or guests over 18 years old are welcome to join us. We'll just be ordering from the menu.

Christmas Eve Invitations – Postcards for your neighbors, family and friends

by Pastor Paul

When we think Evangelism, we usually think about standing on a corner handing out brochures that ask the question, "Are you saved?" That view of evangelism is just wrong, and not Lutheran by any means. I am not saying that there is a particular Lutheran understanding of evangelism, but we are not ones to stand on corners or ask questions that Jesus has already answered on the cross.

What if we had an experience that we knew was meaningful and moving; would we not want to invite people we know to come and see? The Christmas Eve service is one of those events that is so meaningful for the season of Christmas, and so moving--lighting of candles singing Christmas favorites. Christmas Eve is a service we would want to invite people to experience.

Beginning Sunday, December 13, the members of Grace will find 3 Christmas Eve invitations in their mailboxes to share with neighbors, friends, and family. They are simply an invitation that can be sent to someone or handed to someone without fanfare, and without pressure. We are just inviting them to a lovely evening service to celebrate in a traditional way the birth of Jesus.

Imagine if everyone handed out their three cards to a families in the area, and only 10 percent of the invited families came! We could have as many as 24 families visit us for Christmas Eve. What a great outreach that would be. Check your mailbox at church, pick up your invitations and give or send them to people you know. Who knows, we might truly be blessed this Christmas with the visit of new families. If you would like more than 3 invitations, just contact the office. We are ready to please!



Thinking

by Chris Bush



the Box

The word “narthex” or “box” and comes from the Greek *narthēx*, for giant fennel, the stems of which were used to make boxes. For the next three months, we will be thinking “inside the box” and enjoying coffee hour in the narthex after each service. Our hospitality shall be more evident to Grace members and visitors, and we’ll be able to more easily catch up with each other and meet new people before “departing to serve.” There will be both seating and standing stations in the narthex as well as the conference room being available (and nearby!). If you choose, you can bring your beverage and snack down to the Fellowship Hall, though if you stay close-by, seconds are only a few steps away! Let’s approach this trial period with excitement and open hearts, as we listen for God’s voice during this time. And, if you are looking for a recipe that calls for fennel, I’ve got one

Pasty Fellowship

by Vickey Argo/Joe Longcor, Kay Howell, Linda/Russ Trongo

Many, many thanks to all that helped with the pasty event or ordered pasties. By the numbers it basically went like this:

- 308 pasties sold . . .but it's much MORE about the fellowship!
- 32 volunteers on November 7, prepping, making, baking, boxing and selling pasties
- 9 volunteers on November 6, cutting the meat
- 7 volunteers on November 5, prepping/mixing the dough
- at least 4 more volunteers in the "background" buying supplies, making calls, sharing past knowledge...a special thanks to Deb Baker for sharing the basics.
- 4 CURRENT high school youth helping a total of over 10 hours
- at least 8 new volunteers
- at least 4 new well-trained, certified "crimpers" of dough (certificates to be presented :-))
- Countless pleases, thank yous, smiles and teases were shared.

There is already talk of another pasty event/fellowship...me thinks we first rest and "let God" lead...but we look forward to another opportunity to fellowship with each of you and celebrate God's work.

So again thank you and we leave you with Matthew 25:23 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'"

Financial Coordinator

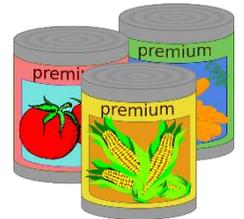
Linda Trongo has resigned her position as Financial Coordinator for Grace Lutheran Church. Linda’s resignation became effective November 1st, 2015. Until a replacement can be found several persons will be filling in to cover Linda’s job responsibilities. All bills and request for reimbursement should continue to be placed in the basket in the Parish Administrator’s office with all of the appropriate paperwork and forms for payment. If the bill or request for reimbursement is to be paid from a non-budget account there is a form that must be filled out and signed by the person in charge of the fund. Please note that there are separate forms for bills to be paid and reimbursements. These forms are found in the small file cabinet in the parish administrators office next to the copier. If you have any questions about the process for getting bills paid or reimbursed, please contact Doug Neeb or Tim Schoessel

Grace’s “Food Box”

by Mary Kleinbrink

The members of Grace Lutheran Church started the food box approximately 20 years ago. A volunteer, who was a member of the church at that time, built the box you see next to Pastor Paul’s office today.

Once a week the food donations are taken to the food bank/pantry at the Methodist Church on Green Street. At that time, shelves are checked to see what the Food Bank is in need of and that need is reported back to our Parish Administrator, who then puts it in the weekly bulletin notes. All personal care items (toilet paper, laundry detergent, toothpaste, etc) that are donated are taken to Barry County Cares.



People in need are required to stop into the Barry County Cares office to sign up for assistance and are provided with paperwork which details how many people are in the family. The Methodist Church Food Bank has limits on the number of each item the family qualifies for based on the family size.

The Food Bank is open 5 days a week and is run by volunteers. There are usually 6-8 family per day that stop in to take advantage of the assistance provided.

If you would like to donate to the Food Bank but do not want to do the shopping, there is a jar on the top of the food box where financial donations can be made. Volunteers will then take the donations and purchase the items that the Food Bank is in need of.

The monthly Noisy Offering that is taken on the second Sunday of the month is sent to Barry County Cares to assist people with utility costs.

Please remember the local families in need when you go grocery shopping. The need is great.

Thank yous

Thank you to all of you for the get well cards and uplifting me in your prayers during my recent lung biopsy surgery. The surgery went well and I am mostly recovered from it. I am going to see a Pulmonary Fibrosis specialist in a few weeks and Jack and I are going to join a Pulmonary Fibrosis Support group that meets once a month. I am blessed to be in this Christian family. Blessings and Peace, Carol Vos

Thank you to those who so graciously offered to assist with the recent funerals for Eileen Oehler and Walt Beck. The families have expressed their appreciation to all the people of Grace.

The Trunk or Treat helpers made Halloween night a great success. Thank you to Mary Kuhlman and Kate Watson for organizing the event that so many children and parents enjoyed.

Grace has some wonderful Church Mice who have been working to clean, sort and organize the library/ conference room.

The Sanctuary now has stained glass windows installed thanks to the diligent efforts of Phil Poholski who carefully installed these beautiful windows.

If you have some Thank You's for members who have helped with a church mission, ministry or event, contact the office before the next Gracegram deadline of December 17th.

Are you a Snow Bird?

by Parish Administrator Victoria



If you will be headed out of town for the winter, please provide your contact information to me so that I can keep in touch with you, sending Gracegrams and other important news. You can leave me a note or call/stop into the office Mon-Thurs, to let me know when you will be leaving and when you anticipate you will return, along with your address and phone number for your 'home away from home'.

Funeral Luncheons Revamping the Process

by Pastor Paul

Things are changing a bit with funeral luncheons in order to improve the process and organization of the luncheons. The funeral luncheon is an important ministry of Grace, as it is with most Christian churches, and we want to maintain this ministry to honor those whom we serve. Remember, volunteering for a funeral luncheon, whether you are donating food or your time in service at the luncheon, makes you a valuable disciple in an important ministry at Grace.

We want to thank Kay Marsh for her offer to organize the funeral luncheons at Grace. Her duties are many and take a great deal of time and energy. We are thankful for her offer to help organize the members of Grace to maintain the high standards.

It is imperative, therefore, to assist Kay Marsh in her task by volunteering for funeral luncheons. When you hear of an upcoming luncheon, call/talk with Kay to offer your services. Please contact her ahead of time so that she can have a better understanding of the people she has and will need to help. Please do not just show up, or she may find herself with too little or too many volunteers. Furthermore, when you are asked by Kay to help, please take the request very seriously, because again the funeral luncheon is a valuable mission of the church to honor the live and witness of past family and friends.

During the Interim Ministry period, the church is in transition, change, and transformation to prepare itself for the calling of a new pastor--the funeral luncheon is one more area of such change.

December Birthdays

- 1 Traci Wales, Myrina Clements
- 6 Michael Anton, Sandra Mosteller
- 7 Charlotte Anton
- 9 Jana Bishop
- 11 Elnora Beckwith, Dave Neeb
- 13 Carolyn O'Connor
- 16 Curt Johnson
- 20 Jeanette Kogge, Cheri Clements
Bill Freedlund
- 21 Vivian Allerdig
- 22 Grace Leahann Pearl Ulrich, Corrina Palmer
- 26 Ilene Hilson
- 28 Karen Halstead, Gary Golnek
- 29 Margaret Wood

December Anniversaries

- 16 George & Phyllis Lietz
- 20 Bob & Sharon Bolton
- 28 Fred & Jeanette Kogge

Memoriam

- 12-2-1997 Lewis Babcock
- 12-4-2009 Louis Neeb
- 12-8-1996 Maxine Rothfuss
- 12-11-1984 John Beck
- 12-17-2008 Gary Howell
- 12-21-2007 John "Bud" Schultz
- 12-25-1996 Bill Hubbell
- 12-27-2007 Helen Janette Anderson

In Our Prayers

Continuing Prayers

Karl Golnek, health concerns –
brother of Mary Kleinbrink and
Jennette Ulrich

Healthy pregnancies

Jacqueline Endsley
Sarah Endsley
Heather Baucom
Mary Beth DeVinney

Military

Kayla Pohl, *daughter of Rob &
Lisa Pohl*

Myrina Clements, *daughter of
Cherie Clements*

Zach Duits, 101st Airborne

Aaron Endsley, Adam Miller,
Alyssa Mills, Amber Reid,
Andrew Ferguson, Ashley Gillons,
Austin Endsley, Ben Curtis, Carl
Franson, Charles & Tim Krewson,
Cole Davis, Dylan Kelmer,
Edward Frost, Greg Scott, Jena
Harwood, Jon Ingran, Jordan
Swank, Josh Lewis, Justin Ogden,
Lena Jordon, Noah Daniels, Phil
DeVries, Ryan Davis, Spencer
Reid, Taylor Gould, Tom
Fenoseff, Zackary Green

Companion Synods in Honduras,
Papua New Guinea, and Latvia

Nursing home residents . . . Beth
Oehler, Dorothy Mayo, Deb
Wood, Vivian Allerdig

Shut-ins . . . Dave Bolton, Ilene
Hilson, Jamie Coplin, Opal
Gillons

In Meam Commemorationem

We Commemorate the Life and Witness of:

Eileen Oehler
Walter Beck



Grace Lutheran Church

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Website: www.discover-grace.org

Facebook: Grace Lutheran Church
- ELCA Hastings, MI

269-945-9414 or 269-945-2645

Fax: 269-945-2698

Our Staff:

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

Financial Coord:

Custodian: Nathan Freedlund
Minister of Music: Cindy Olson
Choir Accompanists:
Marcia Bowman, Chris Bush
Bell Choir Leader: Kim Domke
Organist Emeritus: Donna Buehl

Executive Committee:

President: *Doug Neeb*
Vice President: *Chris Bush*
Secretary: *Kate Watson*



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Winter

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

Summer

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

5th Sundays

Sunday @ 10:00am

Advent and Lent

Wednesdays @ 7:00 p.m.

Winter

(1st Sunday after Labor Day – May)
9:30 AM

5th Sundays

Sunday @ 8:45 am



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Committee Chairs

Brothers of Grace – Joe Longcor
Congregational Care – Margaret Wood
Faith Building – Lorraine Freedlund
Evangelism – Bill Freedlund
Property – Tom Peck & Phil Poholski
Sarah Circle – Kay Howell
Social Activities – Diane Neeb
Stewardship – Tim Schoessel
Youth & Family – Joe Longcor
Worship – Lorie Gladyness