

grace notes

The newsletter of Grace Lutheran Church



COVENANT – *The Pursuit of God* “A Lenten Study on the Promises of God in God’s Word”

Grace’s Lenten Journey begins on Ash Wednesday, February 22nd as we start our 40 day journey to the cross of Good Friday and the empty tomb of Easter.

At the heart of our Christian journey is the PROMISE or COVENANT of God’s love and forgiveness revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is what centers us! It is what gives us hope. In Jesus, we see God’s covenant of love come alive to tell us he is a God who pursues us. He is a God who is relentless in his love. He is a God who persistently reaches out to us no matter what. This is why we intentionally focus our attention on Jesus during Lent...to hear about his temptations, his struggles, his sufferings and sacrificial death, so we hear God whisper again, his love and forgiveness for each of us.

This year our Lenten Journey focuses on Old Testament covenant stories...special moments when God reached out to make a promise of healing, restoration, love and forgiveness to his people. Each weekend in worship, we will hear a story of some familiar Biblical people: Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jeremiah – normal everyday people who God pursues with his promise of love, forgiveness, and hope. As we hear these stories, we will be encouraged to grow and deepen our faith, to intentionally pursue God.

A part of our Lenten Journey will be our next Discipleship Habit: The Study of God’s Word. Throughout the 40 days of Lent, there will be opportunities to strengthen the habit of study through daily Bible reading, prayer journaling, and Sunday Evenings@GRACE classes. God’s written Word is simply a book about God’s covenant to love us. What better way for us to understand this than by studying it!

As we begin on Ash Wednesday, February 22, we start with repentance; admitting our need for God’s forgiveness. Ashes are marked on our foreheads and words are spoken: “Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.” It is the time we are renewed by God’s covenant to pursue us with forgiveness.

In addition to weekend worship, a Lenten Service will be offered at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday evenings. Using the Holden Village Vespers in our worship, we will watch the powerful Nooma teaching videos that challenge us about how to understand God’s radical love in Jesus, in new ways.

One important aspect in our COVENANT – *The Pursuit of God* Lenten Journey is the opportunity to put our faith into action through several Outreach Projects:

- Special offerings for the ELCA Hunger Fund
- Donate food for Minnesota FoodShare
- Support our youth in the 30 Hour Famine
- A special 4 week Noisy Offerings for a “Water Filtration System” for the same orphanage we helped build a water containment tank in Uganda.

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Pastor Mark's Remarks

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I first met Chris at a Caribou over in Champlin. Grace was in the process of interviewing several church stewardship consultants in order to find someone with the right skills and passions to help us grow our generosity. Chris was one of the top candidates and I was anxious to sit down with him. Grace had suffered too long from a scarcity mentality and we needed help to change. The question as **I entered Caribou was: "Was Chris the one to do it?"**

I was honest with him right from the start. Grace was interested in hiring someone on a limited basis – ten hours/week. I explained to him we were **working with the Bishop's office to find** and call an Associate Pastor of Discipleship, but so far there were no candidates to interview. In the meantime, we were looking for someone to help us only part-time. **Chris didn't seem to mind.** He told me he would help us as much as he could. However, as we talked, shared, and dreamed I found **myself thinking: "Could God want to do something very different here?"**

To make a long story short, God did as he helped the Call Committee, staff, and Vision Board discern that Chris was exactly the right person for us to call as our Lay Pastor of Stewardship and Discipleship almost five years ago! As I reflect upon these years I give thanks for the wonderful gift God gave Grace in Pastor Chris.

The first thing you notice about Chris is **his passion for Jesus and how a person's** experience with Jesus can impact and grow generosity.

He is one of those few pastors who loves to talk to people about giving and is not afraid to ask them to give. Right from the start I knew that Chris had a natural ability to connect with people and realized he would make a

big difference at Grace. And now four and half years later, I know he has. He has touched the lives of many and challenged all of us to become more generous!

One of the things I appreciated **right from the start was Chris' sense of "teaming."** Since the start he has been an important part of the staff of Grace, knowing not only how to **lead from the "second chair"** associate pastor position but also doing his part to make sure our team always succeeds. There is very little **"I" in Chris' approach...instead, there's a lot of "we."**

Another wonderful thing about Chris is his ability to risk and try lots of new things. Many pastors might have been hesitant to serve at a church like Grace without former seminary training. Not Pastor Chris! He was willing to preach, teach, preside at weddings and funerals, and jump in where he was needed the most. In addition, coming from a church background different from a Lutheran one might have intimidated some, but Chris came anxious to learn and appreciate our theology and practice.

It's going to be hard for me to see him go. Frankly, I think it will be challenging to find another pastor to fill his shoes. I also think many of **us will miss him deeply.** But we're also excited for him because we know how excited he is to serve with United Way in Tucson. His **excitement is helping us "let go!"**

So I want to join you as we thank him for the wonderful job he has done at Grace and wish him the very best and Godspeed.

In Him,
Pastor Mark Hellmann



Stewardship & Men's Ministries

Thank you for your generosity. We finished 2011 very well, achieving 96% of our December goal of \$122,138. Your giving has enabled us to begin the New Year on a strong foundation.

There were over 50 families who gave amounts ranging from \$25 to \$10,000 as part of our end-of-year campaign. And for many, that was in addition to regular giving for either current or capital funding. **And this all took place in an economy that's still on shaky ground with high unemployment, continued home foreclosures, weak business reports and financial uncertainty in Europe.**

Thank you for your gifts of financial treasure. Jesus said **"it's more blessed to give than to receive"** (Acts 20:35) and many of you have experienced that blessing. **And, you know it's hard to describe to someone who hasn't done it or experienced it.**

Thank you for your gifts of time and talent. While financial support is critical, your gifts of time and **talent are essential to sustain God's Kingdom work** here at Grace. Many of you give countless hours on weekends as ushers, teachers, or serve in other capacities during the four worship services. And even more of you serve as lay leaders or simply serve on teams at events during the week. **Sometimes that's the time that ministry really happens.** Thank you.

Thank you for a **great 4½ years here at Grace. It's** hard to believe that exactly five years ago I was beginning conversations with Pastor Mark and the Vision Board about stewardship and pastoral needs **here. It's been a grand experiment with me as a "lay" pastor in an associate pastor role. And God's** used me in many ways that I know have benefited Grace and the Kingdom, all of which can be hard to measure. So much of discipleship and spiritual formation is about relationships and making small steps in growing closer to God, which is our most important relationship of all!

Thank you for your hugs, well-wishes and congratulations on my transition to a new **adventure.* It's been humbling and gratifying to** serve God and you in my role. My hope is that the work God has done through me, other staff and volunteers here – all has helped to develop a growing culture of generosity. And not just about

finances (though that leads the way) but in all areas of **our lives, recognizing that God owns it all and we're** simply his money/time/talent managers.

My hope and prayer is that what's been started and developed with generosity in my tenure here would **continue. Money and finances has for years been "the great silent subject" in the church and for too long** stewardship has only been regarded as the annual pledge drive to get people to commit to giving for **the new budget year. It's not. Giving is intricately** woven into our spiritual journeys and those who are closest to Jesus tend to be more generous givers. Surveys confirm that relationship (between how we handle money and spiritual growth) time and time again.

Most of all I pray that all of us would continue to diligently move forward in our journey of faith. And **while I'll no longer be "Pastor Chris", I feel like God** has definitely called me to this new position, one in which I can talk about and focus on generosity, albeit in a secular non-profit environment. Interestingly enough, United Way was started by a group of religious leaders to address the needs of the poor and impoverished.

Thank you. I want to leave you with this encouragement from Hebrews 10:24-25, **"And let us** consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you **see the Day approaching."** (NIV)

In Him,

Pastor Chris

P.S. *I start my new job as Senior VP of Resource Development/Chief Development Officer at United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona on February 15. **I'll continue to pray for Grace...and send warm** thoughts!





A Note from the Church Administrator

It has been wonderful getting to meet many of you over the last couple months. Thank you for continuing to share your life stories. As we end the year, it is easy to see that we have been blessed with incredible generosity here at Grace!

In preparing the material for the Annual Budget hearing we have discovered that overall, our 2011 giving was up 4% over 2010. This is a great sign of encouragement when compared to the challenging economy.

Our 2012 Budget is the result of prayerful planning by the Vision Board and Church Staff. As with most budgets, this is our attempt to put onto paper the financial cost of the hopes and dreams of the staff and leadership at Grace. As **we look forward in 2012, we are excited to “live out” some of the specific goals we believe God** is leading us towards in the new year.

We will hold our Annual Budget Meeting on Sunday, January 29th at the end of each of the morning Worship times. This is when the Vision Board will seek approval from the congregation for the 2012 budget. Please join us for this important event.

We look forward to serving with you in order to reach the goals God has laid before us in 2012!

In Him,

Ralph Holbrook



Your old sneakers
are worth more than
you think!



PLEASE bring your old sneakers to Grace! Your used tennis shoes will be reused as affordable footwear for people in need around the world, plus it saves the landfills from being polluted with those rubber soles that do not decompose. And in addition, your donated sneakers will help raise funds to fight hunger.

Rum River Elementary School is taking the GreenSneakers EcoChallenge for Education in recognition of Earth Day this year. The goal is to gather 3,000 pairs of used sneakers to raise funds for a school program to fight world hunger. GreenSneakers will pay 50 cents per pound and then shoes are distributed as affordable footwear in some of the neediest countries. Shoes are also given to agencies handling disaster and humanitarian relief efforts.

The money raised will fund the event, Rum River Against Hunger, to be held Friday, April 27, 2012. The organization, Impact Lives, will come to Rum River and set up stations so students can pack meals that will feed hungry children around the world. This is the fourth year Rum River has participated in this event and the students have truly become aware of world hunger through this program.

So clean out your closets! (That is one of your **new year's resolutions, right?**) **Then bring your** old tennis shoes to Grace and place them in the designated container in lobby. Yes, please tie the shoe strings together. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Stacy Lysne, pslysne@comcast.net. Thank you!

Outreach Ministries Highlights . . . the year 2011 in Review

THANK YOU to GRACE VOLUNTEERS for serving God and His people in these very tangible and grace-filled ways. You truly are the hands and feet of Jesus!

Outreach in our local community in 2011:



Family Promise of Anoka County – Grace volunteers provided lodging, meals and caring hospitality to local families without homes. Grace hosted Family Promise three different weeks during 2011, using the time and talents of over 250 volunteers.

Family Table Meal – Volunteers continued cooking & serving a complimentary meal on the third Sunday of each month, feeding over 700 people in our local community this year.

Habitat for Humanity – Ten volunteers from Grace served at a Habitat work site in Brooklyn Park last August.

Grace Quilters – These faithful women graciously made over 300 quilts and donated them to hospitals, women shelters, crisis nursery, etc.

May All Be Fed food shelf – Volunteers donated an abundance of non-perishable food items, and we gave away over 400 bags of groceries in 2011.

Our Savior's Shelter – Grace volunteers continued to serve a monthly meal at this transitional housing shelter in Minneapolis.

Prayer Shawl Ministry – Volunteers weave in prayers while knitting and crocheting 40 shawls & lap blankets. Then these shawls and lap blankets were delivered to individuals who were ill or home bound.



Outreach to people around the world in 2011:

Youth Mission Trip – Sixteen high school youth & three adults went on a summer **mission trip to Atlanta, helping people and sharing God's grace in this inner city community.**

Feed My Starving Children - More than 1,100 volunteers from Grace packed over 425,000 meals at FMSC this year, which will feed 1,164 kids a life-saving meal each day for an entire year. Praise God for volunteers!

Operation Christmas Child – Grace collected 374 shoe boxes filled with supplies and support, then the boxes were delivered to children around the world. Ten volunteers served at the OCC Distribution Warehouse also.

Grace4Tanzania – This ministry sent a huge container full of clothing, bikes and supplies to Tanzania! We are waiting to hear that the container arrived safely.

And excitement builds for this outreach opportunity in 2012:

An Adult Mission Trip is being planned to Haiti July 20-27 with World Wide Village ministries. Join the adventure as we experience and express our faith in new and meaningful ways!

Upcoming Events...

CONNECT CLASS on Sunday, February 26th from 5:00-7:30 pm

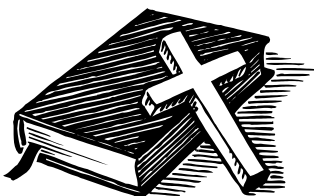
- **Would you like to be more 'connected' at Grace?**
- Would you enjoy making friendship connections as well as learning about the core values, ministries and history of Grace Lutheran Church?
- Are you interested in exploring church membership at Grace?

If you answered 'yes' to at least one of these questions, then please join us for the next CONNECT class from 5 – 7:30 pm on Sunday, Feb. 26. We will enjoy dinner beginning at 5 pm, then get more connected with each other and with the ministries of Grace. And yes, there will be activities for the whole family on this evening, and childcare will be provided.

All are welcome to attend the CONNECT class at Grace Sunday, Feb. 26. Please sign up by calling the church office at 421-6520, or by using the blue opportunity pages during worship.

Bethel University Class Opportunity

Are you interested in learning more about Christian thought and ministry while earning your B.A.? Applications are now being accepted for **Bethel University's B.A. in Christian Ministries** which is offered through the College of Adult & Professional Studies. Take classes one night a week or online beginning in February in Arden Hills, MN. Financial aid is available. Call Michelle at 651-635-8000, or 800-255-8706, ext.8000 to learn more. Or, visit us online at caps.bethel.edu



Volunteer at Feed My Starving Children!

Children living in boxes and surviving on garbage deserve a future . . . they need food and they crave hope for a better tomorrow . . . it starts with food, and the food starts with you!

Join us at the Feed My Starving Children warehouse in Coon Rapids as children & adults hand-pack meals specifically formulated for malnourished children, then the meals are shipped to nearly 70 countries around the world.

It's simple – it's fun – it's just 2 hours of your time – it's rewarding – it's something the whole family can do (3rd graders and older) – AND it really makes a difference in the life of a starving child.

PLEASE join other Grace volunteers on these serving dates & times:

| | |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| Fri. Feb 10 | 8 – 9:30pm |
| Sat. Feb 25 | 7 – 9pm |
| Sat. March 3 | 2 – 4pm |
| Fri. March 30 | 6 – 7:30pm & 8 - 9:30pm |
| Sat. March 31 | 2 – 4pm, 4:30 – 6:30pm, 7 – 9pm |
| Sat. April 14 | 2 – 4 pm |

Sign-up procedure:

Please register on-line for faster check-in at Feed My Starving Children.

- Go to www.FMSC.org
- Click **"Register to volunteer"**
- Click **"Permanent site" to register on line**
- Click **"Join an existing group or family"**
- Under group name, type in **"Grace Lutheran"**
- For the March 30/31 dates, type in **"Lutheran churches"** as we are joining area Lutheran churches to serve on this weekend
- Choose the shift that you'd like to volunteer, then click **"join"**
- Click **"confirm"**
- Then you will be prompted to set up an account the first time you register, after that it will be easy for you to reserve or change your volunteer spots on line.

*** If you do not have access to a computer, please call the church office to register or sign up on the blue opportunity pages in worship.

FEBRUARY 2012

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| 29 Annual Meeting H. S. Retreat at Luther Point 8:00 AM Traditional Worship 9:00 AM Blended Worship & SONday School 10:20 AM Contemporary Worship & SONday School 12:00 PM Family Promise of Anoka County 3:00 PM Sr. High Youth | 30 12:00 PM Family Promise of Anoka County 7:00 PM Women's Small Group | 31 12:00 PM Family Promise of Anoka County | 1 9:00 AM Quilters 9:30 AM WOW 10:00 AM Leadership Team Meeting 12:00 PM Family Promise of Anoka County 1:00 PM All Staff Meeting 1:00 PM Ruth Circle 6:30 PM Catechism 6:30 PM Rockin' Kids Bible Club 6:45 PM Adult Choir | 2 9:30 AM WOW 12:00 PM Family Promise of Anoka County 2:00 PM Prayer Shawl Ministry 6:30 PM Yoga Devotions 7:00 PM Worship Team Practice | 3 7:00 AM Men's Bible Study 12:00 PM Family Promise of Anoka County | 4 7:30 AM Men's Ministries 12:00 PM Family Promise of Anoka County 5:00 PM Worship & SONday School |
| 5 8:00 AM Traditional Worship 9:00 AM Blended Worship & SONday School 10:20 AM Contemporary Worship & SONday School 12:00 PM Family Promise of Anoka County 3:00 PM Sr. High Youth | 6 6:30 PM Pastoral Care Meeting 7:00 PM Women's Small Group | 7 | 8 9:00 AM Quilters 9:30 AM WOW 10:00 AM Leadership Team Meeting 6:30 PM Catechism 6:30 PM Rockin' Kids Bible Club 6:45 PM Adult Choir | 9 6:30 PM Yoga Devotions 7:00 PM Small Group Leaders Meeting 7:00 PM Worship Team Practice | 10 7:00 AM Men's Bible Study 8:00 PM Feed My Starving Children | 11 5:00 PM Worship & SONday School |
| 12 8:00 AM Traditional Worship 9:00 AM Blended Worship & SONday School 10:20 AM Contemporary Worship & SONday School 12:00 PM Farmstead Valentine Delivery Day! 3:00 PM Sr. High Youth | 13 7:00 PM Women's Small Group | 14 6:30 PM Vision Board | 15 9:00 AM Quilters 9:30 AM WOW 10:00 AM Leadership Team Meeting 6:30 PM Catechism 6:30 PM Rockin' Kids Bible Club 6:45 PM Adult Choir | 16 2:00 PM Prayer Shawl Ministry 6:30 PM Yoga Devotions 7:00 PM Worship Team Practice | 17 7:00 AM Men's Bible Study | 18 5:00 PM Worship & SONday School |
| 19 Baptism Sunday 8:00 AM Traditional Worship 10:20 AM Contemporary Worship & SONday School 12:00 PM Easter Hunt Planning Team Meeting 3:00 PM Sr. High Youth 5:30 PM Family Table | 20 7:00 PM Women's Small Group | 21 | 22 Ash Wednesday 9:00 AM Quilters 9:30 AM WOW 10:00 AM Leadership Team Meeting 6:45 PM Adult Choir 7:00 PM Ash Wednesday Service | 23 6:30 PM Yoga Devotions 7:00 PM Worship Team Practice | 24 Synod Assembly 7:00 AM Men's Bible Study | 25 Synod Assembly 5:00 PM Worship & SONday School 7:00 PM Feed My Starving Children |
| 26 8:00 AM Traditional Worship 9:00 AM Blended Worship & SONday School 10:20 AM Contemporary Worship & SONday School 3:00 PM Sr. High Youth 5:00 PM CONNECT Class | 27 7:00 PM Women's Small Group | 28 | 29 9:00 AM Quilters 9:30 AM WOW 10:00 AM Leadership Team Meeting 5:30 PM Lenten Supper 6:45 PM Adult Choir 7:00 PM Lenten Service | 1 6:30 PM Yoga Devotions 7:00 PM Worship Team Practice | 2 7:00 AM Men's Bible Study | 3 New Members Weekend 7:30 AM Men's Ministries 9:00 AM Baptism Class 2:00 PM Feed My Starving Children 5:00 PM Worship & SONday School |



Roller/Climb In the City—Saturday, February 18

This combined outing for middle & high school students gives you the option of either the Rollerdom at the Metrodome, or the new Vertical Endeavors climbing center in Minneapolis.

We will meet at the church at 2:00 pm on Saturday, February 18th and you can choose what you want to do:

Rollerdome: Rollerblade from 3pm until 5:30pm. Cost is \$5 admission + \$5 if you need to rent rollerblades.

Vertical Endeavors: the 2 hour climbing session is \$20 and the group will climb from 3:30 until 5:30pm.

That's not all: Attend the play "And a Child Shall Lead Them" performed by the Youth Performance Company at 7:30pm. Cost for the play is \$9 + dinner \$\$ for fast food before the play.

A minimum of 10 youth/adults are needed for each **activity...sign up by** Sunday, February 5th at The Dojo or Wednesday, February 8th at Catechism. We will need parents to help with transportation.

Youth Mission Teams Update

We have two groups that will be going out into the world this summer to be the hands and feet of Jesus. We have a combined middle/high school team that will be serving with YouthWorks in Milwaukee, WI this June 23-30.

We also have a group of high school youth that will be representing our church at the ELCA Gathering in New Orleans this July. You can help support our teams by participating in these fundraising events:

Valentine's Weekend Childcare: Sign up on the blue sheets for one of our girls to provide childcare at your home on Friday, Feb. 10 or Saturday, Feb. 11.

Cookie Dough Sale: we will be taking orders beginning February 11 for a variety of frozen cookie dough that will be delivered in March.

Adult Mission Trip to Haiti this Summer!

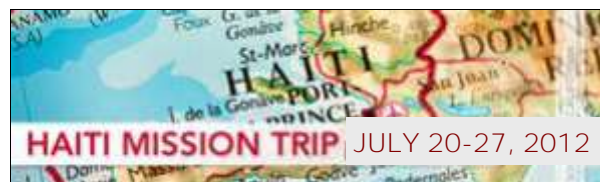
All adults are encouraged to prayerfully consider joining the Adult Mission Team travelling to Haiti, July 20 – 27. We will serve with World Wide Village ministries in a variety of mission activities such as construction work, medical/dental clinical work, and serving in orphanages and schools.

We know God will use the gifts we bring, and **each adult will be valuable ...so please consider** serving with this Mission Team! We will spend one day preparing and serving Feed My Starving Children food at an orphanage or school, thus seeing firsthand the benefits of the meals that we have packed at Feed My Starving Children.

The mission trip expense will be approximately \$2,000 per person, which includes airfare.

If you are unable to join the team in Haiti, but are still interested in supporting this mission adventure, we would welcome any financial assistance to fund our mission projects in Haiti.

If you would like more information, please contact Greg and Lori Ackerson, 763-390-7890, Lori.Ackerson@allina.com. You may also read about this mission organization at www.worldwidevillage.org



Front page cont'd...

As we focus upon the sacrifices Jesus made to reveal **God's covenant of love and forgiveness**, we are asking everyone at Grace to consider the follow:

- Make Weekend Worship and Wednesday Vespers services a high priority.
- Join us for Lenten Suppers on Wednesday, March 16-April 13. Enjoy fellowship and community around a simple meal, as various Grace ministries prepare and serve a simple meal at 5:45 p.m.
- Use the daily Bible readings in Grace Lenten Brochure which will be available at the Welcome Center in the Lobby or on our website.

We invite you to the Journey....the journey of God's pursuit of love found in Jesus. May it also be a time for us to pursue him!

I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. Isaiah 42:6

The Vision Board!



Change!

Change. Life is change. We can seek change, we can embrace change, we can resist change, but we must accept change. Just when life seems to have settled into a comfortable routine, it happens again, another change. The changes that we initiate and control are very easy to **embrace. It's the changes that are not a part of our plans that are more difficult to accept.** When we **accept that they are part of God's plan for us, they become easier to embrace.**

Like people, institutions and organizations have a life. For them, change is also a part of that life. Over the past year, it seems that Grace has had a lot of change. The latest, of course, is the wonderful opportunity that Pastor Chris has been offered in Arizona. While we are all happy for Pastor Chris and Cathy, we will also certainly miss them.

Change. Won't we all be glad to settle into that comfortable routine following this change? Well don't get too comfortable, I'm sure that God already has the next change headed our way. Let's all embrace that change and joyously move forward to see his plan unfold.

Ed Stang

Vision Board Member



Serving God through Grace!



Are you one of those people who write **New Year's resolutions? If so, how long** are you able to keep them -- two days, two weeks, two months? Whether you write down resolutions or not, let me **provide you with a couple of suggestions as to "How you can serve God through Grace Lutheran Church" and be able to keep that New Year's resolution.**

There are many opportunities for you to serve at Grace. We not only have outreach ministries which include Feed My Starving Children, Family Promise, and Our Savior's Shelter, but also servant opportunities to assist during the church services. For example, you can use your spiritual gifts as a projectionist, an usher, or a sound technician just to name a few. The servant opportunities are on a once-a-month basis. For more information on ways in which to serve Grace during worship or beyond, please call the church office at 763-421-6520.

Remember, you are not only serving Grace Lutheran Church but you are also showing and demonstrating the ways in which we serve Jesus Christ.

"There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us." 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

Blessings to you in the New Year,

Pat Walters, Vision Board Member

Children Ministry

March Baptism Workshop

Baptism is an important step in the life of a family. A Baptism Workshop will be offered for parents who would like to have their child baptized here at Grace, on Saturday, March 3rd at 9:00am. During the workshop, you will have an opportunity to explore what Baptism means for you and your child, as your family takes this step in your faith journey. We will share with you, insights on raising a child who knows and loves God. The next Baptism Workshop will be May 5 at 9 a.m. Please contact Monica Allen at monicaa@graceandover.org or the church office to sign up for the workshop.



SONday School

Family Worship Weekend will be February 4 & 5. All children will begin in worship and be **dismissed to their classes after the Children's Time.** Birthday Offerings are February 5 for Age 3 – Kindergarten and on February 12 for Grades 1-5. Our offerings go to Feed My Starving Children. We have collected over \$25 since September or 100 meals. Please help your child remember to bring their offering. Remember a quarter is more **than enough for one meal. Let's add those quarters up and see how many meals we can provide by May!**



Easter Egg Hunt



The Easter Egg Hunt will be on Saturday, March 31st. A Leadership Team is being formed to organize this great family adventure. Please prayerfully consider joining this team to help make this day the best it can be for the children of Grace. With many hands and hearts working together, this can be a great experience for everyone. If you would like to be a part of this team, please join us on Sunday, February 19 at 12 p.m. Please contact Monica Allen, monicaa@graceandover.org or sign up on the blue sheets.



SONday School Valentine Service Projects

The SONday School children spent the first two weeks of January completing service projects **for Valentine's Day. The first project was a Valentine Basket and paper flowers.** We were able to complete and fill 60 baskets that will be delivered by Grace Families on Sunday, February 12 to the Farmstead residents. If your family would like to help deliver the baskets, please sign up on the blue sheets or contact Monica Allen. We will meet in the Fellowship Hall at noon for a quick meeting and then proceed to the Farmstead to make the deliveries.

The second Valentine Project was to the **University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital.** The children put together 90 Valentine kits that children in the hospital can use to make their own Valentines. Thank you to Stacy Surratt for all of her hard work in putting both of these projects together. Thank you also to all of you who have donated Valentine supplies this past year. The doilies, cards, glue sticks, and other craft supplies were very helpful.

Children's cont'd.

Lent Nursery

With the coming of the Lenten Season, we need additional nursery help to provide care for the extra services. Ash Wednesday is February 22 with the first of our Wednesday services. If you can help with the nursery any Wednesday night through March 28 or any of the Holy Week services, please contact Monica Allen, or sign up on the blue sheets.



Sundays@grace – Faith Explorers

Faith Explorers, a time for children while their parents attend sundays@grace, begins on March 4– April 29. At Faith Explorers, we investigate talents, nature, hobbies, science, art, and more. We **are looking for “Faith Explorer Guest Stars”** who would come and share your talent. Faith Explorers also needs Sunday Night Hosts who will come and guide the children through the evening 5-7:30 p.m. If you would like to share a talent as a Guest Star or be a Sunday Night Host, please contact Monica Allen, or sign up on the blue sheets.

Thank You Grace!

Grace Lutheran Church-

Thank you for sending the Girl Scout Troop to sing beautiful songs to us. That did brighten our spirits on that cold December 22nd night. They also brought us a tin of Christmas Cookies and candy. Delicious!!! Thank you!

Love, Everett Hove, Barry & Janis Fowler

Dear Grace Friends,

Thank you so much for the kindness shown to our family, during the passing of Lona's father. Your prayers, cards, calls, and gentle words were truly an encouragement. We were simply overwhelmed with love and support from our Grace family.

Cory, Lona, Mitchell and Amy Kampf



Friendly Reminders!

Please help us to cut our postage costs and notify Kris in the church office if you are in the process or planning to move, 763-421-6520. We will update your information in our database so that we do not have to pay a returned mail fee.

If you are a Graceful Servant who serves during our worship services, please be sure and pick up a monthly schedule at the Welcome Center, if you are not receiving them via e-mail. Please contact Tyree McDowell at tyreem@graceandover.org with any changes or updates, and thank you in advance for your willingness to give of your time and talents.

We received many Christmas Greetings along with THANK YOU's to our congregation...
here are just a few:

Thank you for your service and partnership! *Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity*

Blessings to you in thankfulness for your support of Operation Christmas Child!

Franklin & Jane Graham, Samaritan's Purse International Relief

Thank you for your faithful commitment to Christ's call to care for the needy, and to our important life saving mission. You are a blessing to us! *The Staff at Feed My Starving Children*



Grace Lutheran Church

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www.graceandover.org

Are you ready to take the next step in your spiritual journey?

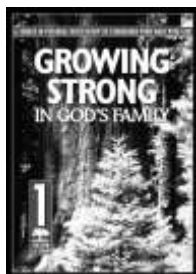
Join on Sunday nights, from March 4th—April 29th for

SundayEvenings@Grace from 5:00pm-7:30pm

Sunday Evenings @ Grace is a great opportunity to connect with other adults who want to grow deeper in their relationship with God and know how to live that out in everyday life. We gather around good food, dynamic conversation, and focused attention to the Bible. This is an 8-week commitment that is well worth the investment.

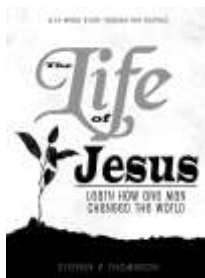
Small group discussion is a huge part of our learning experience. You can either sign up as a small group, or sign up as an individual **and we'll connect you with a small group.**

Dinner is served from 5:00-6:00pm (\$4.00 *suggested donation for dinner*), and studies run from 6:00-7:30pm. Childcare is available. Sign up on the blue sheet in worship to register yourself or a group.



Growing Strong in God's Family is a course designed to give you the basic building block for experiencing a dynamic relationship with God. No previous Bible knowledge or experience is required. Your questions are welcome!

Teacher: Jeannie Hellmann



We claim to follow Jesus. How much time have we really spent looking at his life—what he did, what he said, and why that matters? This course will guide you through all four Gospels in the New Testament and tie them into one fascinating story.

Teacher: Pastor Steve Thomason