

grace notes

The newsletter of Grace Lutheran Church



A JOURNEY
through Lent

Our Lenten journey to follow Jesus to the cross continues throughout March, as we move toward the dramatic moments of Holy Week – Jesus’ last days before his death, and the discovery of the Empty Tomb.

These days in the Lenten journey are precious. They help prepare us for the wonder and meaning of Easter. Each event provides a special insight and spiritual connection to the great sacrifice Jesus made for the salvation of the world. We invite you to join us on this journey all the way to the Empty Tomb.

In order to continue our commitment of “No Turning Back” we encourage everyone at Grace do the following:

- ◆ Make Weekend Worship and Wednesday Vespers services priority.
- ◆ Join us for Lenten Suppers every Wednesday at 5:30pm as we connect with others and cut out shoe patterns for Sole Hope.
- ◆ Use the daily Bible readings in the Grace Lenten Brochure which are available at the Welcome Center in the Lobby or on our website.

HOLY WEEK CELEBRATION

Palm Sunday (March 23/24) begins Holy Week as we celebrate Jesus’ triumphant ride into Jerusalem. Palm branches will be distributed prior to worship which will add to the festive celebration of Jesus’ triumphal entrance into Jerusalem. Our Music Ministry Teams will present an inspiring worship service about “The Passion of Jesus Christ.”

Maundy Thursday (March 28) will be celebrated in a unique and meaningful way at Grace this year. The 7:00pm service will be a dramatic “living” presentation of the “Last Supper.” The Grace Music and Drama Teams will provide a beautiful musical setting to a real live staging of one of our most important events of Holy Week.

On **Good Friday** (March 29) we will gather at 7:00 p.m. for the “**THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS**”. The service follows Jesus’ last journey of love...the journey to the cross through dramatic readings, beautiful artwork, and reflective music.

EASTER CELEBRATION

Grace will offer many opportunities to celebrate the Victory of the Empty Tomb, on Easter weekend. We will begin our celebration at the **Easter Vigil Service** on Saturday, March 30 at 5:00 p.m. This service has a special “flavor” of celebrating both Good Friday and Easter morning with readings of the Old Testament as a backdrop to our celebration of new life in Jesus’ resurrection. The service will have lots of music and baptisms!

On **Easter Sunday** (March 31) we offer four service opportunities to celebrate Jesus’ resurrection. We invite you to join us in this great day of celebration here at Grace.

- Easter Sunday Services March 31**
- 6:30 a.m. Sunrise Worship**
 - 8:00 a.m. Traditional Worship**
 - 9:30 a.m. Blended Worship**
 - 11:15 a.m. Contemporary Praise Worship**

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Pastor Mark's Remarks:



No Turning Back

I hated my first real job of painting the outside of the local barber shop. The building was old. It was in bad repair and needed lots of scraping before I could even start to paint. But worse, it was owned by a shyster whom I felt sure would try to bilk me. For a teenager's first job, it wasn't promising!

I know you might find it hard to believe, but I complained just a *little* to my parents. I did not like working on the hot steamy days of a Pittsburgh summer. I did not like the constant yelling by the owner. He was never satisfied. And I didn't like the fact I couldn't go to the pool with my friends!

I can't tell you how many times I wanted to quit. But my father would always say to me: "Mark, never start a job you can't finish!" No matter how much I complained, whined, and begged, it was always the same answer: "You can't quit!"

I can't help but remember the temptation to walk away from that summer painting job, especially when I'm in the middle of Lent. For many, we're often tempted to quit and "turn back" from the daily Bible readings, meditation times, extra worship services, and special acts of serving. Most of us start Lent with the best intentions, but find it challenging to sustain the enthusiasm and self-discipline to make it all the way to the end.

When I find my enthusiasm flagging, I remember my Dad's advice: "Mark, never start a job you can't finish!" And when I reflect that no matter how bad it got for Jesus, he never quit!

He finished his job by going all the way to the cross! And I find that as long as I keep that in mind, I too can resist the temptation and say: "No turning back!"

So I pray that no matter where you might be on the journey of following Jesus, you might join me in thanks and praise, thanking God for sending Jesus to die for us and never turning back from the cross!

In Him,
Pastor Mark

Thank You!



Many thanks to the team of men and

women who step up to help in so many ways when the need arises to host a funeral luncheon here at Grace. It takes many hands (& feet) to make this happen, from phone calls for bar donations, to room set up, to food preparation, to those who help serve our guests, and assist with the clean up.

Help is needed in all of these areas and is usually required on short notice, so if you feel called to share your gifts and talents with the Funeral Ministry here at Grace, please contact Kris Miller at 763-421-6520. It's a wonderful way be the hands and feet of Jesus, and bless families during a very tough time in their lives.

A special thanks to Jan Galvin who gets the ball rolling by contacting all the workers and coordinating that piece of it, and to Jan Quick who does all the shopping and planning for the food. Thanks also to Flossie Knutson, Lola Money & Betty Peterson, our callers who contact the congregation to donate bars; as well as Donna Doyle, Jan Prieb & Jean Griffin, who have graciously offered to join the calling team, as Flossie steps down after many years on the team.

Pastor Steve's Remarks:



More Than a Weight Loss Program

Lent is traditionally a time when people take on some sort of *fast*. That's a strange word when you think about it. *Fast*. We go fast all the time in our culture, don't we? Do we really need to go faster? Maybe we should call it a "*slow*" so we can give up going *fast*.

I usually give up eating sweets during Lent. That sounds good doesn't it? Yet, when I slow down and really think about it, what is my real motivation for doing this? Here's my dark confession. Every year I eat too much during the holidays and I'm a little embarrassed about the spare tire around my waist. So, Lent is a great excuse to cut out the sweets. That's a win/win, right? I get to "fast" from sweets so I seem really spiritual, AND I get to lose a few pounds.

Hmmm...something doesn't seem right here. Lent is more than a weight loss program.

If fasting is just about what I gain out of it, then where is the focus? It's on me. Lent is designed to redirect my focus away from me and toward God's justice in the world. This focus moves in three directions.

- ◆ **First**, it is a time to focus on *justice to God*. That means giving God the attention that God deserves by spending time in prayer and scripture reading on a daily basis.
- ◆ **Second**, it is a time to focus on *justice to myself* (yes, I can focus on me a little). I should cut out sweets, not because I want to look good, but because my body is a temple of the Holy Spirit and it deserves to be well treated.
- ◆ **Third**, it is a time to focus on *justice to the poor*. This is a time when we remind ourselves that those of us who live comfortably and have enough (or more than enough) have a responsibility to fight for the oppressed and care for those in need.

It's really about following Jesus deeper into God's dream for the world; a world of justice where everyone gets what they deserve as children of God, created in God's image. It is a wonderful, and often painful, journey.

There is no turning back!

My prayer for you (and me) is that this Lent will be more than a weight loss program. May it be a time of justice, peace, and refocusing our priorities to line up with God's.

In Him,
Pastor Steve



Director of Worship & Music: Jonathan Orwig

Dear Grace family,

By the time you read this, we will be well into our Lenten journey. This is one of my favorite times of the year – an opportunity to set some time aside and reflect on the amazing gift God gave us, the sacrifice of his Son for our salvation. I know we all have busy lives, but I encourage you to come to the Wednesday Vesper services whenever you are able and plan to attend during Maundy Thursday, Good Friday (or both) and you don't want to miss our celebration of the Resurrection on Easter Sunday.

I also want to invite you to participate with the choir during Lent – we meet immediately following the Wednesday Vesper service at about 8 p.m., we are preparing music for Lent, Palm Sunday and Easter and would love to have you join us. Call the church office at 763-421-6520 or drop me an email at jonthano@graceandover.org.

Hope to see you in worship (and in choir practice!)

Blessings!





Church Administrator: Ralph Holbrook

We continue to make wonderful strides in our **Free 2B Grace Campaign**. At our January Kickoff event, we had almost 300 people (or 176 families) attend. We received many positive comments from those Grace families. It was a great time focusing on one of our Core Values – **weConnect!**

Speaking of weConnect, the **Free 2B Grace Team** has been able to meet with 121 families (20% of Grace) in order to share the vision we have here at Grace. This is a wonderful metric to celebrate! Our heartfelt appreciation goes out to those who have already accepted the invitation to meet individually with the Free 2B Grace volunteers and engage in conversation about the future of the church, while praying along side the church leadership, and prayerfully considering a sacrificial gift to help us meet our vision. If you have not been contacted yet, please know the team continues to work hard to reach all the families here at Grace.

Thank you for your vote of confidence as we submitted the 2013 Annual Budget for your approval! As we mentioned at the January Budget hearing, this budget is our attempt to put on paper the financial costs related to the hopes and dreams of the Staff and Leadership here at Grace.

The approved 2013 Budget holds great promise, as well as an increased commitment from Staff, Leadership, and the Congregation. Here is a recap of some of the Capital and Missional Goals that were shared:

- ◆ Continue to emphasize spiritual growth and serving beyond our walls through strengthening the ministries we already have
- ◆ Increase our Benevolence to 9% as we strive to meet 10% in three years
- ◆ Provide an inspiring and spiritually relevant worship experience
- ◆ Invite the congregation to join us on the spiritual journey of stewardship with the Free 2B Grace Campaign
- ◆ Connect with 100% of the congregation to share Grace’s Mission and Vision
- ◆ Equip lay leaders who support the ministries of Grace
- ◆ Continue to pay our mortgage on time, build our Capital Fund balance, pay down our mortgage debt

- ◆ Address some of the safety and deterioration needs of our facility

As a Staff, we will continue to be fiscally responsible by adjusting our spending according to the gifts we receive. Please take the time to prayerfully discern your part in helping us attain our 2013 Goals.

In Him,
Ralph

For surely
I KNOW THE
plans
I have for
YOU,
says the
Lord...
TO GIVE YOU A
future
WITH
Hope.
Jeremiah 29:11, NRSV



Senior Moments: Pastor Gene Heglund



My ministry at Grace began in the fall of 2000 as a visitation pastor. Duties included assisting with liturgy, occasionally preaching, and calling on shut-ins both home and hospital. Pastor Mark Hellmann also asked me to organize a senior group. Our first official meeting was January 16, 2001, at Perkins in Anoka, with about 12 in attendance.

Since that time the group has evolved into the Graceful Seniors with a monthly breakfast gathering at the Farmstead. Meetings are the third Tuesday of the month at 8:30 a.m. Our average monthly attendance is about 35. The current charge for a delicious breakfast buffet is \$6.50. The meeting begins at 8:30am and is usually completed by 9:45. If you would like to make a reservations for breakfast, please call the church office at 763-421-6520.

Our primary goal is to provide fellowship, support, and enrichment. An executive committee assists in program planning and in notifying members of up-coming meetings. It has been my responsibility to provide a brief study or devotional each month. Our studies have included the Psalms, Luther's Small Catechism, Christian Deviations, and world religions. Our future plans include a study of the Parables. Our seniors also provide congregational support in many varied ways including serving at funeral luncheons, helping with church maintenance, holding a weekly quilting group and financially undergirding some youth activities.

Grace Lutheran Church's senior group provides fellowship and support with a low-keyed approach. Call the church office for further information. In the meantime I'm going to continue my search for good stories and humorous anecdotes.

Blessings, Pastor Gene



Vision Board Member: Alden Riley

I am writing this on Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. Tomorrow is Feb 14th, Valentine's Day.

At first I am perplexed by the contrast of these dates, so close to each other on the calendar, yet so opposite in the flood of emotions they elicit. On one hand we begin following the path of Jesus that will eventually lead him to the cross and his ultimate crucifixion. The next day we declare and celebrate our love for one another. As I ponder this paradox I come to realize the two events are not so dissimilar after all. During Lent we learn the depth of God's love for all of us, that he would sacrifice his own son to die for our sins.

Lent has always been my least favorite period in the church calendar. It's like watching the movie "Brave Heart" over and over. Each time you watch you cheer the small victories of William Wallace, as he fights to free the Scots from King Edward of England. The Scots eventually earn their freedom, but you know the hero dies in the end.

During Lent, Jesus is subjected to temptation and sacrifice in his journey to free us from sin. Each year as I take the Lenten journey with him, my love for Jesus grows deeper and stronger. Each year on Good Friday my despair at the suffering he endured for my sins deepens. Then on Easter Sunday, when I visit the empty tomb, my heart is filled to bursting with joy of the risen Christ.

Our church has also entered into a journey, to remove financial roadblocks that are preventing us from being "Free 2B" the mission God wants us to be. We need your help to remove these roadblocks, when called, we ask that you consent to a visit to hear the plans we have to grow our mission of Grace in the heart of Andover.

Upcoming Events:



During our Lenten journey of ‘No turning back,’ we will combine our efforts and our Noisy Offering resources to support a ministry called “Sole Hope.”

We will help African children get shoes, and also help African adults learn a trade, namely how to make shoes. **SOLE HOPE’s mission is to provide HOPE, healthier lives, and freedom from foot-related diseases through education, jobs, and medical relief. Read more about this ministry at www.solehope.org**

Each Wednesday night during our Lenten Suppers, we will host a ‘shoe cutting party’ when we will trace patterns and cut fabric. Every single piece of fabric you cut will bless the feet of children in Africa, protecting them from foot infections. The shoe soles are created from old discarded rubber tires in Africa, while the outer shoe material is cut and prepared by YOU, then shipped to Africa where the shoes are sewn and distributed to kids in need.

PLEASE DONATE: Old blue jeans (any size, any condition); Plastic milk jugs and large plastic lids from ice cream buckets. Bring your pinking shears.

Donate your time and join the shoe cutting party each Wednesday night during our Lenten Suppers. SOLE HOPE . . . putting closed toed shoes on African children . . . one pair at a time!



**Friday Night,
April 26**

“The Great Escape”

Fun, Food & Fellowship just for Women!
Don’t Miss It!!!

Children Ministry:

Family Worship Weekend - March 3rd



Children will begin in Worship Services with their families and then be dismissed to SONday School after the Children’s Sermon. The SONday School children will be sharing a special song in worship. Children may just come forward when it is time to sing.



The **Rockin’ Kids Bible Club** service project this year was making Valentine baskets for the Farmstead. Thank you to all the people who donated candy and milk cartons. Also thank you to all the families who helped deliver them and Stacy Surratt for organizing this project.

SONday School Birthday Offering

We have collected **\$100.38** in Birthday Offering since September! Wow! That is enough to purchase four flocks of chicks which is about 200 chicks that will bless four families in the world. Kids at Grace are making a difference! Birthday offerings will be collected on **2nd – 5th Sundays of the month.**

SONday School Memory Work

Each SONday School class is working on their own special memory piece for the year. When kids are ready, they may recite to Kim or Monica, and then they can pick a surprise from the “Prize Well”! Congratulations to the children who have already done this!





**WOMEN’S
FELLOWSHIP EVENT**

“RECIPES for LIFE”

9 to Noon Sat. March 2

BRUNCH will be served
along with bunches of FUN

Please bring your favorite recipe & a friend
(along with 5 copies of your recipe)



**It's not too early to start thinking about VBS!
Save the dates of June 10-14, 9:00am-12:00pm
on your calendar!**

Our Theme this year is **“Tell It on the Mountain”**
Tell It on the Mountain VBS will take us on an expedition to the top of five mountains and teach us more about God’s might and grace and His Son, Jesus our Savior and Lord! Get excited to sing fun songs, do crazy crafts, eat yummy snacks, and *more*. Plus, you’ll learn all about Jesus so that you can go TELL everyone about Him! Can’t wait to see you there! Registrations will be available after Easter.



**Summer Musical Adventure
Camp**

This year, our Summer Musical Adventure Camp will feature the Musical, **The Rockslinger and His Greatest Hit**. Mark your calendars to join us as we explore a story of David, a boy whose faith in God helped face Giants! Musical Camp is a 7 day adventure beginning Monday, July 29-Sunday, August 4. Registrations will be available after Easter.



**Easter Egg Hunt at Grace!
Saturday, March 30th
10:00 – 11:30am**

We will have fun games, crafts, stories, and an exciting hunt, as well as an “Eggstra” special visitor, you won’t want to miss!! RSVP to Kim DeVries at kimd@graceandover.org or call 763-421-6520 for more information.

Youth Happenings:



**Coming THIS Summer:
One Week with 2
AWESOME Adventures
For Middle School Youth**

- ◆ **Luther Dell Camp June 23- 28 or**
- ◆ **Summer Festival MN June 25-29**

Luther Dell... It's more than just a drive down a five mile dirt road; so much more than a lake and a campfire and a carpet ball table. It's a place to be a kid and be with friends. It's a place to open your eyes and look for Jesus all around you.

Luther Dell is located 7 miles west of Remer, MN on South Big Boy Lake with 25 acres of beautiful woods. The cost this summer is \$380.00 for the week. **NEW: Registration this year can be done online at www.campwapo.org, click the tab for Luther Dell and all the information is there! We will help arrange transportation to and from camp with the parents of the youth that are attending.** There are scholarships available from the camp, so please don't let the cost deter you!

Summer Festival... It's a mega gathering of middle school youth for 4 days of non- stop games, outdoor activities, fun with friends, and challenging faith stuff. This all happens on the campus of UW: River Falls in Wisconsin. The cost is \$355 + \$25 for transportation. Check out more about this at summerfestivalmn.com

We will be fundraising to help pay for **part of the costs** through the **Grace Garage Sale June 20-22**. For more information or questions, please contact Tom Baker at tomb@graceandover.org.

Wind River Youth Mission Team news:

We have 22 youth and 5 adults that will be representing our church as the hands and feet of Jesus this summer! Our *YouthWorks* team will be traveling to the **Wind River Reservation in western Wyoming this July 13-20**. This team will be working to raise funds to cover the costs of their trip through Green Valley Spring Plant and Gift Card Sale and Chip Company orders. During April & May, our Youth work for YOU! Garage clean out, yard work, special projects...check the blue sheets for details coming soon. Thank you Grace Family for helping support our Youth!



Grace Lutheran Church

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in the heart of Andover and beyond!*
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HOLY WEEK



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Palm Sunday (March 23/24) - Join us during our regularly scheduled worship services at 5pm on Saturday, 8, 9, & 10:20am

Maundy Thursday (March 28) - Presentation of the living “Last Supper” at 7pm.

Good Friday (March 29) - “The Stations of the Cross” at 7pm.

Easter Vigil Service (Saturday, March 30) at 5pm.

Easter Sunday (Sunday, March 31) - Four worship times are offered:

- ◆ **6:30 a.m. Sunrise Worship**
- ◆ **8:00 a.m. Traditional Worship**
- ◆ **9:30 a.m. Traditional with Contemporary Flair**
- ◆ **11:15 a.m. Contemporary Praise Worship**

