FROM THE PASTOR

At the Congregational Meeting on January 29, we’re going to update everyone on the progress we are making in our new mission vision and partnership with LSSI. It’s pretty exciting stuff! As we look at the ways we can care for the growing population of seniors aging in place, it has become ever clearer how vital this ministry is for the well-being of our community.

This focus on seniors has led some of our members to raise a very good question, though: Are we giving up on our kids? We don’t have as many as other churches, and the ones we have are pretty heavily concentrated in the younger ages. Some parents have transferred to churches with larger youth programs for the sake of their children. And if that’s where their children will thrive, that is a good and valid choice. They have the ability to serve Christ wherever they go.

But Beloved, please do not think that we don’t have a wonderful ministry for our kids! Numbers aren’t everything. I have been involved with youth programs with big numbers, and there is certainly good stuff happening there. But large numbers can also mean less individual interaction between kids and adults, more need for entertainment-oriented events to keep kids engaged, and the risk of some kids still feeling like they fall through cracks unnoticed.

We have fewer kids than some other churches. But for many families, that is actually a good thing because of the special kind of nurturing we can offer. Have you carefully looked at what happens when our kids gather? Have you watched them focus when Bradford has them take a centering breath before playing chimes? Seen how eagerly they step up for their parts when Cyndi guides them through a worship skit? Noticed the pictures they draw for the adults around them to say “Thank you!”? Witnessed the trust and joy when they gather around Becky for an event she has organized, like decorating for Advent/Christmas? Seen the trust and love they develop for so many other adults in the congregation who are getting to know them individually? Smaller groups of kids usually means no one gets left out or overwhelmed, and they feel safe and welcomed.

Recently a visitor (who was here for the baptism of a friend’s baby) came up to me after a service where the kids played music and presented a skit. With a huge smile, she said to me, “I work in children’s ministry in another congregation—so I know something about this. You all have an absolutely amazing program for your kids here!” She saw what I hope you see—it’s not always the numbers of kids or of activities, but the quality of relationship our kids experience here. Our kids will be a blessing to whatever mission we enter into. They aren’t here to assure our survival—they’re here to learn who they are in God’s eyes, to grow in faith, and to turn that faith into blessing. Which they are doing with a lot of love and help from all of you.

Thank you!
Welcome the Savior with us!

Grace Lutheran Church of Glen Ellyn
Grace to You Page 2
Month of January 2023

Welcome the Savior with us!

This year Grace will celebrate with one service at 4:00pm on Christmas Eve. Our worship will feature all the traditional Christmas Eve favorites, including communion and the Candlelight Service. Special music, beautifully decorated and lit sanctuary, and best of all, the Word born amid us once again. Family and friends are more than welcome to join us! This service will be available via zoom using the zoom link below.

No Christmas Day Service and No New Years Day Service

There will not be in-person worship services on Christmas Day, Sunday, December 25 or on Sunday, New Year’s Day, January 1 at Grace Lutheran. Watch for additional details on video presentations that are being prepared with other local churches.

For those wishing to participate in an in-person worship experience, St. Luke Lutheran on Butterfield Road will be offering worship services on both days at 9:30am and Faith Lutheran on Park Boulevard will offer Christmas Day worship service at 11am and New Years Day worship service at 8:30am and 11am.

Sunday Worship Time

Sunday worship at Grace is at 10am followed by fellowship at 11am.

Zoom Worship

We will continue to offer a Zoom link for our Sunday worship service for those who are continuing to participate from home. If you need a bulletin, remember you can view (on another device) or download/print a bulletin from Grace’s website. Just click on Quick Link to Worship.

Zoom link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89031586315
Dial In: 1 312 626 6799
Meeting ID: 890 3158 6315

January’s FaithTalk will take us through the journey of the liturgical year. (What does that mean anyway?, for example!) What are the seasons of the Church Year, what do they mean, where did they come from, and what’s the point? There’s more to it than you might think, and getting the whole picture can truly enrich your worship experience.

Join us in the downstairs Kitchen Meeting Room on Thursday, January 5 from 12:30-2:00pm. Everyone is welcome!

Congregational Meeting

Mark your calendars for Sunday, January 29th at 11:15am. Grace will have its annual congregational meeting following our Sunday worship service. Your attendance is needed to reach our 50 member quorum requirement. The meeting will be conducted in the Sanctuary and on Zoom. We will be voting to approve the 2023 budget and electing new Church Council members. We will also share with the congregation our vision and plans for a new and exciting ministry partnership that will carry Grace into the future. Come and be a part of this exciting time at Grace.

Financial Forum

The Finance Committee will host a meeting in Fellowship Hall on Sunday, January 22 at 9am to present the 2022 financial overview and the 2023 proposed church budget. Following the presentation there will be a question and answer session. Please plan on attending.

People of Grace

Please join the People of Grace for dinner and fun conversation on the dates below. The group meets monthly on the third Tuesday and the location will vary each month to keep it fresh. Please contact Jeff Nelson at jeff.nelson@vlses.com if you are interested in attending these events.

December 20; January 17; February 21; March 21
Faith Formation in January and Beyond

January Faith Formation: No class 1/1 or 1/15.
1/8, 1/22, and 1/29 will combine Spark/Shine together meeting in the Great Room.

Middle School will be doing their own at home study during this season.

February Faith Formation: 2/5; 2/12; 2/19 no class; 2/26

March Faith Formation: 3/5; 3/12; 3/19 no class; 3/26

April Faith Formation: 4/2 no class; 4/9; 4/16 no class; 4/23; 4/30

May Faith Formation: Possibly a Children & Youth Sunday Service

Spark Preschool-K, Shine (1st-6th Grade), Faith In Action (7th-12th Grade)

9:00-9:15am: Gathering and fellowship time in the Great Room on 2nd Floor with crafts and toys. Coffee and healthy morning snacks available for families as they drop off their students.
9:20am: Group Prayer and Sending Song
9:20-9:45am: Spark Preschool-Kindergarten Class stays with Mrs. Graf in the Great Room
Shine 1st-6th Grade Class with Mrs. Drager in gym for Faith Formation and Bradford Thompson for Hand Chime Rehearsal

Wednesday Night Faith Formation Confirmation 7th/8th Grade @ Faith Lutheran Church

We meet at Faith Lutheran Church from 7:00-8:30pm.

Gingerbread House created at the Gingerbread House & Tree Trimming Pizza Party on Wednesday, November 30 by the Grace children and youth and their families.

Footprints to the Manager

Thank you to Cyndy Drager, Becky Ficarella, Bradford Thompson, and the Children of Grace for a wonderful Advent presentation on Sunday, December 11. The service started with beautiful prelude music with Carson on Piano; Addy on Piano; Hand Chimes with Bradford; and Krystal Bells with Becky. Spark and Shine then presented Footprints to the Manager a story interspersed with songs and bells and a reading of Luke 2:1-14.
Monday Evening Bible Study

The Monday evening Bible study group, starting on **Monday, January 30 at 7:00pm**, will study the Gospel of Matthew. This is the primary Gospel we are hearing in church in the current church year which began in late November.

Although evidence suggests that Mark was the first Gospel written, as both Matthew and Luke draw from it for their basic structure, Matthew is placed first in the New Testament because it serves as a bridge to the Hebrew Bible. In the first four chapters, Matthew quotes extensively from the Hebrew prophets to show that the life of Jesus fulfills the Scriptures. Matthew was addressed to a mixed community which included many Jewish converts to Christianity. The author wanted each part of the community to accept the other and to put their new life in Christ ahead of all that might divide them. The Gospel is filled with compassion, concentrating on the key teachings of Jesus to “Love God and love your neighbor.” There is a stress on the emerging church as an assembly of those called out to serve in the Kingdom of Heaven, right here in this world.

We will use Kerygma Bible study materials. The writer of the Resource Book for Matthew is Robert Bryant, Chair of the Department of Religion and Philosophy at Presbyterian College in Clinton, SC. He also wrote the Resource Book for First Corinthians which we studied some years ago. The sessions include a video presentation by the author. Participation will be possible in person in the Great Room and via Zoom link.

The Monday night group has become cohesive over the years, sharing conversation as well as our Bible study. Still, there is always room for more, and we will make you feel welcome. Kindly contact Mark Hamilton or Vince Hardt if you have not participated before so that we may order course materials for you and add you to our Email list.

vvince2001@hotmail.com, marham999@gmail.com

Help Us Save Lives This January During National Blood Donor Month!

Grace Lutheran’s next blood drive will be **Thursday, January 5 from 2:30-7pm**. Donors will be entered into the Drive to Save Lives Sweepstakes to win an SUV. Appointments are encouraged; walk-ins welcome! Our goal is 15 units but this drive is able to process 25+ donors!

https://donate.illinois.versiti.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/5602181

Thank you to Tim Stephan for organizing this event at Grace.

Another PADS Update!

As part of our Community outreach along with the amazing support of our volunteers, Grace continues to support PADS. In the last couple of years PADS has continued to evolve to serve the needs of their guests. PADS guests are now housed in a 130-unit Interim Housing Center (IHC) using a repurposed hotel in Downers Grove.

So here is the latest approach to PADS:
The guests now have access to snacks and desserts at the PADS site. We at Grace would like to concentrate more on shelf stable or homemade meals, fruits, vegetables and healthy snacks if possible. Of course all donations are appreciated. If anyone has contacts with restaurants or stores who would like to help, please let us know.

Please leave donated food for PADS **(1st Tuesday of the month)** upstairs in the Church Kitchen via the gym or you can drop-off at our home. **The food at the Church is picked up around 1:30pm in the afternoon. At home we will accept food until 3pm.**

While all our volunteers are fantastic, a special thanks goes out to the Kregor family. The Kregor’s supplied over fifty homemade individual spaghetti dinners with bread along with fifty homemade blankets.

Thanks to all for your generosity and volunteering!!

Joe and Donna Jacobo
PRAYER REQUESTS
Lori Garabrandt, Rich Davison, Dorothy Derrico, Susan Yerger, Brittany Huizenga, Dorothy Tracy for healing and strength.
Rodger Plant and his wife, Victoria, welcomed identical twin boys November 27. Donald Allen Oak Plant – 4.3 pounds and Leo David Spruce Plant – 4.7 pounds. They were premature at 33 weeks and currently in Neonatal ICU.
Prayers for our Homebound Members:
Carol Petersen, Norma Petersen

LET’S TALK ABOUT RACE?
JOIN US AFTER WORSHIP ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5, TO LEARN MORE!

From its beginning in 1988, the ELCA has made a firm commitment to become an increasingly multicultural and an intentionally anti-racist church. How are we doing here at Grace, living up to this commitment?

Is there interest in starting an open-ended conversation about the ways in which experiences of race and racial disparities are affecting our lives and our community? One possible outcome of such a conversation could be to explore ways in which we can take action together to work toward racial healing.

Other communities on this journey have found the format of a sharing circle helpful. This format is based on a mutual agreement to create a safe space for all who choose to participate and to practice deep listening as we talk about difficult topics. Join us after worship on Sunday, February 5 for coffee and conversation to learn more. During this discussion, we will address the following questions:
• What is racial healing and why is it important to talk about it?
• What is a sharing circle and how does it work?
• What are the ground rules we agree upon to facilitate a safe sharing space for all?

Is there interest in starting a Sharing Circle on Racial Healing at Grace? If there is, we will discuss next steps.
Karin Slenczka, Member of Grace

ATTENDANCE

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ALTAR FLOWERS

The flower chart is on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Room. Arrangements are $20 each (note price increase).
Sign up on the chart in the Fellowship Room or you may email or call the church office. Please indicate how you would like the flowers noted in the bulletin.