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Outreach Partner Spotlight: Haitian Timoun Foundation

Through your generous giving to the Grace One Fund, HTF received outreach support funds this winter. HTF is raising women and their families out of abject poverty through a grassroots program call Chemen Lavi Miyo. Here is one story of incredible transformation.



Gislaine, a resident of Wòch Pab, faced financial hardships before joining the CLM program with her partner Jonel and their two children. Initially, Jonel supported the family by laboriously crushing rocks from the river and selling gravel. Their financial struggles led Gislaine to buy groceries on credit. Upon joining CLM, she requested goats and a pig, receiving two goats that multiplied to five, along with a pig that gave birth to two healthy boars. Gislaine, inspired by CLM's emphasis on small commerce, used a loan from the savings group to start a passion fruit business. She diversified, buying and selling various

goods at markets in Laskawobas and Kwafè. Now, Gislaine is the primary earner, repaying loans, contributing to savings, managing her children's needs, and expanding her livestock. With a second loan, she further boosted her business, repaying it successfully. As the one-year cycle concluded, Gislaine withdrew 25,500 gourds from her savings, combining it with other funds to purchase a cow for 65,000 gourds. Her story showcases resilience, entrepreneurship, and the transformative power of the CLM program. Before CLM, women like Gislaine were living on the fringes of society. They lived with food scarcity, lacked shelter, and had no assets. With CLM, their life is changed! They are living a life with dignity and their confidence and vision are contagious. They are inspiring their neighbors and communities. Partnered with CLM, we continue the much-needed work to eradicate ultra-poverty and restore dignity to the women and families who are living on the margins of society.

Our giving to HTF this winter is helping to launch the next cohort of women in the program. Thanks be to God and to you!

#Haiti #betterhaiti #hopeforhaiti #Haitianpeople #haitianchildren #childrenofhaiti #haitistrong #prayersforhaiti www.htflive.org

grace in ACTION

A radically inclusive multicultural community who serve and lead together with the love of Jesus.

Rooted & Rising - Unbounded Generosity

by Jason Hervin, Congregational Board President

Let your roots grow down into Jesus, and let your lives be built on Jesus. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness. ~ Colossians 2:7

We are midway through the first quarter of our two-year journey in Rooted & Rising. It is radically clear that Grace is rooting in Jesus, seeing our faith grow, and overflowing with thankfulness. In January, thanks to your living into *Unbounded Generosity* we started our R&R journey with a record month (up over \$80,000 from January 2023) finishing with \$146,862 income. Through your generosity and as a part of living into the One Fund Unified Spend Plan, where 15% of all generosity goes towards outreach, Grace has donated \$22,000 to our Outreach Partners. These Outreach Partners include Hope Rising for India, Haitian Timoun Foundation, Des Moines Food Bank, World Hunger, Lutheran World Relief, Disaster Response, Lutheran Counseling Network, and our support for the ELCA Synod, giving first fruits forward to further our impact in our local and global partners and communities.



We invite you to continue to live in to our Rooted & Rising journey together. Growing deeper in **Worship + Connect + Serve**, while rooting in Jesus, letting Jesus flow in and through you. I'm deeply thankful for your generosity, commitment, friendship, and getting to share our lives together on this Rooted & Rising journey.

Rooted & Rising Celebration Worship and Breakfast - Sunday, April 21

On Sunday, April 21, we will pull out all the Rooted & Rising worship elements and host a celebration breakfast as we give updates to the work of Rooted & Rising and how your commitments to worship – connect – serve – and give is making an impact both within the congregation and out there in the larger world. Pull out your t-shirts – mugs – print material – and be in prayer and invitation for all of us to go deep and wide in our growth as a congregation.

In the meantime, hum these words that we sing in worship at Grace.....

Words & music, Geoffrey Boers

Chorus - Rooted and rising, spirits are shining, our hearts revealing God's love and grace in the world.

verse 1 - Lord you go before us showing us the Way. Grounded in your Spirit, now we go forth today. Grace and love awaits us, strengthens, guides, and lifts us, your Holy Spirit gifts us a life lived to love.

Chorus - Rooted and rising, spirits are shining, our hearts revealing God's love and grace in the world.

verse 2 - May our roots grow deeply, in the garden of your Word. May we grow to be your heart and hands for the world. Lifting up the lonely, the suffering and the poor. Your love is ever boundless, so boundless we love.

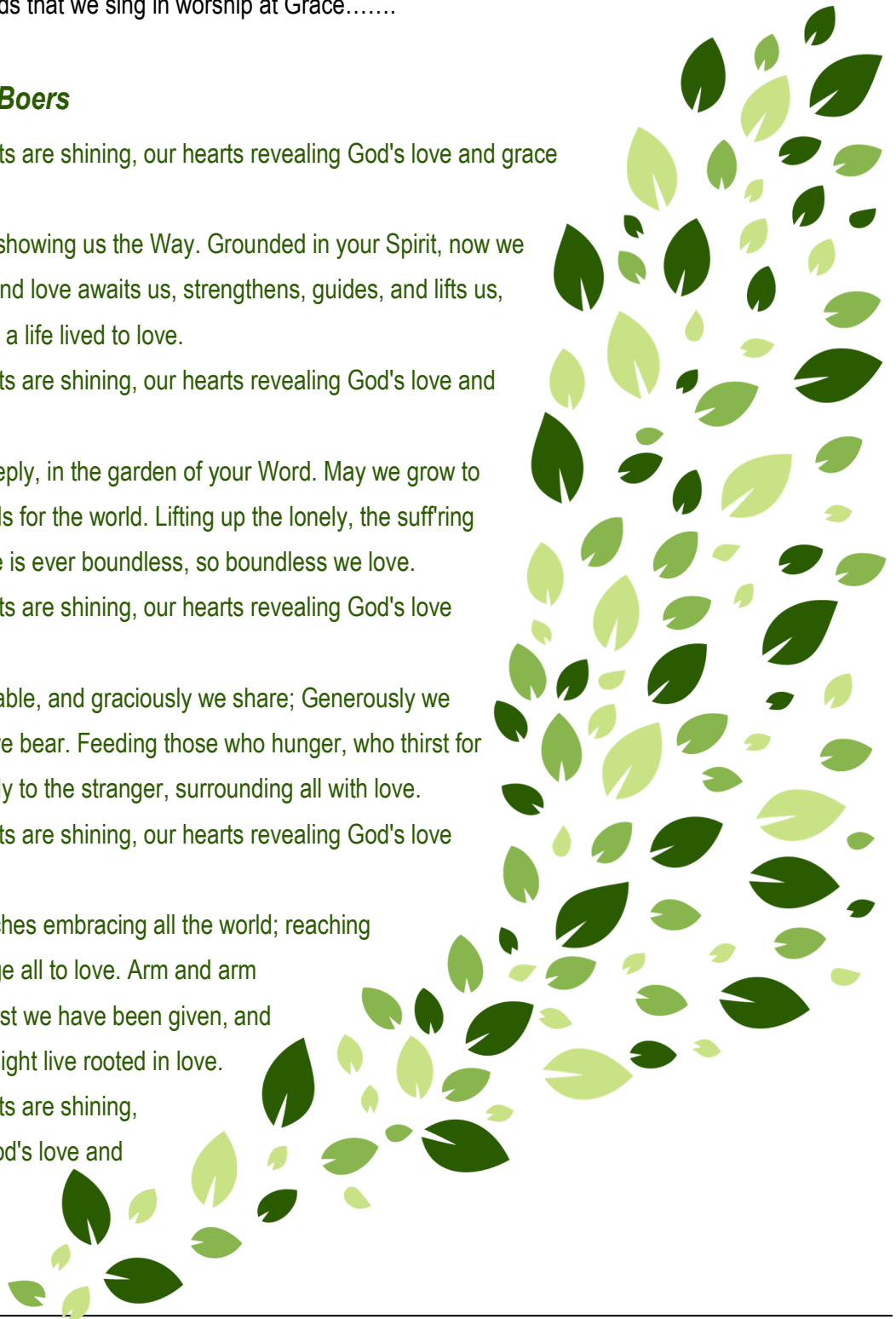
Chorus - Rooted and rising, spirits are shining, our hearts revealing God's love and grace in the world.

verse 3 - We bring what we are able, and graciously we share; Generously we offer up the Holy fruit we bear. Feeding those who hunger, who thirst for healing touch - be fam'ly to the stranger, surrounding all with love.

Chorus - Rooted and rising, spirits are shining, our hearts revealing God's love and grace in the world.

verse 4 - May our arms be branches embracing all the world; reaching out to gather, encourage all to love. Arm and arm we give the gifts that first we have been given, and die each day that we might live rooted in love.

Chorus - Rooted and rising, spirits are shining, our hearts revealing God's love and grace in the world.



Grace Refugee Resettlement - Mashwani Family

by Tessa Krippaehne



On November 29 I received a text from our family that the baby was coming early and asking that I meet them at the hospital. I quickly loaded my car with all the diapers generously donated by our congregation and headed off to the hospital. I met Bibi Gul and Sharif Ullah in their delivery room and spent time visiting with them before she gave birth (while invited to, I did not stay for the actual birth!) It was a beautiful, sacred, prayerful time. The joy was short-lived as two weeks after the birth I received another urgent message to meet them at the hospital. Baby Haris had been rushed to the hospital, he was diagnosed with RSV and on oxygen for several days. Many of you may have noticed that Haris was listed in the prayers of the church, I expressed to our family that many people were praying for Haris and they wanted me to pass along their gratitude. Haris is now a beautiful healthy three-month-old baby and the family surrounds him with so much love and joy!

As a ministry team, we began our 2024 gathering with some of our key leaders around a table to debrief our experience co-sponsoring our first Afghan Refugee family. We discussed some of the challenges and how we could better address them the next time around, as well as our experiences that made serving in this ministry positive and fulfilling. **In 2024 our ministry name will shift from Grace Afghan Support to Grace Refugee Resettlement as we look towards other ways to help refugees in our country.** We have some ideas for how our ministry can serve refugees locally, and options to sometime in the future sponsor refugees from other countries, but for 2024 our ministry focus will be co-sponsoring our second Afghan Refugee family through Lutheran Community Services NW.

Please mark your calendars for Sunday, April 14, Adult Faith Formation hour where we will give an in-depth insight into what our co-sponsorship experiences were like, testimonials from our team about their time spent with our family, and our plans for welcoming the next family. I'm hopeful this story-telling presentation may inspire you to join our team, inspire others in generosity, and ignite passion for this amazing ministry of Grace.

Welcome Pastor Titus Nirmal Kumar - Hope Rising for India Foundation



Pastor Titus..... "salvation is feeding a hungry person, giving medicine to a sick person, loving the person others have thrown away."

"Thank you for your partnership in bringing healing and wholeness to the world."

#hoperisingforindia

A Message From Our Bishop

by Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee

February 2024



From the Bishop:

Today as I write this, I am acutely aware that I am home. You see, I was supposed to be on a plane today – traveling to the Holy Land – with thirty people from this synod. We were going to see holy sites: the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem, Galilee, Jerusalem, and so much more.

Besides visiting these holy sites, we were going to be with our Lutheran siblings in Palestine and Israel. We were going to visit with and learn from Bishop Azar, the pastors, and the laypeople of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL). We were going to visit our Lutheran

schools in Bethlehem, Beit Sahour, Ramallah, and Beit Jala. We were going to visit the only liberal arts university in Palestine – Dar Al-Kalima University in Bethlehem. We were going to visit the Lutheran hospital, Augusta Victoria Hospital. And we were going to visit our Jewish siblings who work for justice and peace.

Today as I write this, I am acutely aware that today is the one hundredth day since fighting began in the Holy Land.

On October 7, 2023 Hamas killed around 1,200 people and kidnapped over two hundred. It was a horrible and horrendous attack on women, children, and the elderly.

Following this attack, Israel began striking with guns, bombs, and other devices of war. At this moment, the death toll in Gaza is 24,100 dead with 61,000 others wounded. It is estimated that two-thirds of those killed in Gaza so far are women and children –all non-combatants. Almost the entire population of Gaza is now displaced, and starvation and disease are rampant.

By anyone's estimate, these are horrifying statistics, and they cannot, at all, begin to acknowledge the pain and anguish from all sides.

Now, I am not an expert of the Holy Land or the Israel-Palestinian conflict. I cannot begin to parse out all that happens in this area of the world – especially in such a short article as this. But as a baptized child of God, pastor, and your bishop, I know that this war is not God's way. I know that God calls us to advocate for those whose voices have been silenced. I know that God calls not for a pretend cease fire but true dialogue. I know that God calls us to a just peace where all people are recognized as human.

As many of you know, I was part of a group of seventeen ELCA bishops who went to the Holy Land last year. While we were there, we visited the ELCJHL schools in Palestine and Israel. We saw Muslim and Christian children learning together. We saw dancing and singing. We listened to their stories and we rejoiced at the hope we saw there. When we visited Augusta Victoria Hospital during this same visit, we saw Muslim doctors treating Christian patients and vice versa. When we visited with an Israeli non-profit dedicated to justice for the Palestinians, we saw Jews and Muslims, Israelis and Palestinians, working together for peace and justice.

Dear Beloveds in Christ, please take to heart what our brother in Christ, ELCJHL Bishop Sani Ibrahim Azar, said on Reformation Day 2023 while speaking at the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in Jerusalem:

"It is very hard to speak about hope here in Jerusalem ... As Palestinian Christians, we have been here for many years, not recognized, but calling for reconciliation. We are serving people's needs and we are working for the future of the whole human family...The priority right now is to end the war, to stop the killing of women and men, children and the elderly ... We hope that our Christian brothers and sisters elsewhere in the world are praying for us, praying for Christians in the Holy Land and for the rights of Palestinians to exist here."

As we are privileged to be in our homes – and as millions have been displaced from their homes – let us pray for true peace, work for justice, and speak out against hatred.

Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it... The Lord is near to the broken-hearted, and saves the crushed in spirit. Psalm 34:14, 18

+ Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee / bishop@lutheransnw.org

Celebrating Christmas



Christmas Eve angels practicing for service

All of Our Ministries Are a Care Ministry

by Pastor Chad Johnson

We're made for relationship. In a hurried and chaotic world we so often forget this. But slow down and spend a few minutes with anyone and you quickly realize that those are sacred moments well spent. Beyond the opening welcome there are shared stories of hurt, hope, and challenge. No matter the age, the chapter, the season, all of us are in need of care and called to give care.

We pray that within the life of GLC all feel cared for and supported during the whole of life. One of those chapters is end of life care. All of us are part of the process too. A warm welcome, a caring gesture, an uplifted prayer, a card of encouragement, showing up at a memorial, sitting with a grieving family member, bringing a food item, washing a few dishes, all add up to the Christ care that Jesus calls us to in the world.

In some recent home visits, I read this story from Calvin and Hobbes, to those facing end of life concerns. Each time, a sacred pause, a few tears, and acknowledgment, that while the world does not deal with end of life concerns well, we the church are here to walk alongside in this way. We stand in there together as people of resurrection, trusting God to do God's very best work when all is said and done. We grieve deeply, but our hope is even greater. Our tears fall, and we are there to raise each other up. For all here who care so wonderfully, thank you!

May these words bless you as we all journey together as Christ's body in this messy, complicated, broken and yet beautiful, world.

From Calvin and Hobbes...



"Calvin? Calvin, sweetheart?"

In the darkness Calvin heard the sound of Susie, his wife of fifty-three years. Calvin struggled to open his eyes. God, he was so tired and it took so much strength. Slowly, light replaced the darkness, and soon vision followed. At the foot of his bed stood his wife. Calvin wet

his dry lips and spoke hoarsely, "Did... did you.... find him?"

"Yes dear," Susie said smiling sadly, "He was in the attic."

Susie reached into her big purse and brought out a soft, old, orange tiger doll. Calvin could not help but laugh. It had been so long. Too long.

"I washed him for you," Susie said, her voice cracking a little as she laid the stuffed tiger next to her husband.

"Thank you, Susie." Calvin said.

A few moments passed as Calvin just laid on his hospital bed, his head turned to the side, staring at the old toy with nostalgia.

"Dear," Calvin said finally. "Would you mind leaving me alone with Hobbes for a while? I would like to catch up with him."

"All right," Susie said. "I'll get something to eat in the cafeteria. I'll be back soon."

Susie kissed her husband on the forehead and turned to leave. With sudden but gentle strength Calvin stopped her. Lovingly he pulled his wife in and gave her a passionate kiss on the lips. "I love you," he said.

"And I love you," said Susie.

Susie turned and left. Calvin saw tears streaming from her face as she went out the door.

Calvin then turned to face his oldest and dearest friend. "Hello Hobbes. It's been a long time hasn't it old pal?"

Hobbes was no longer a stuffed doll but the big furry old tiger Calvin had always remembered. "It sure has, Calvin." said Hobbes.

"You... haven't changed a bit." Calvin smiled.

"You've changed a lot." Hobbes said sadly.

Calvin laughed, "Really? I haven't noticed at all."

There was a long pause. The sound of a clock ticking away the seconds rang throughout the sterile hospital room.

"So... you married Susie Derkins." Hobbes said, finally smiling. "I knew you always like her."

"Shut up!" Calvin said, his smile bigger than ever.

"Tell me everything I missed. I'd love to hear what you've been up to!" Hobbes said, excited.

And so Calvin told him everything. He told him about how he and Susie fell in love in high school and had married after graduating from college, about his three kids and four grandkids, how he turned Spaceman Spiff into one of the most popular sci-fi novels of the decade, and so on. After he told Hobbes all this there was another pregnant pause.

"You know... I visited you in the attic a bunch of times." Calvin said.

"I know."

"But I couldn't see you. All I saw was a stuffed animal." Calvin voice was breaking and tears of regret started welling up in his eyes.

"You grew up old buddy." said Hobbes.

Calvin broke down and sobbed, hugging his best friend. "I'm so sorry! I'm so sorry I broke my promise! I promised I wouldn't grow up and that we'd be together forever!!"

Hobbes stroked the Calvin's hair, or what little was left of it. "But you didn't."

"What do you mean?"

"We were always together... in our dreams."

"We were?"

"We were."

"Hobbes?"

"Yeah, old buddy?"

"I'm so glad I got to see you like this... one last time..."

"Me too, Calvin. Me too."

"Sweetheart?" Susie voice came from outside the door.

"Yes dear?" Calvin replied.

All of Our Ministries Are a Care Ministry, *continued*

"Can I come in?" Susie asked.

"Just a minute."

Calvin turned to face Hobbes one last time. "Goodbye Hobbes.

Thanks... for everything..."

"No, thank you Calvin." Hobbes said.

Calvin turned back to the door and said, "You can come in now."

Susie came in and said, "Look who's come to visit you."

Calvin's children and grandchildren followed Susie into Calvin's room. The youngest grandchild ran past the rest of them and hugged Calvin in a hard, excited hug. "Grandpa!!" screamed the child in delight.

"Francis!" cried Calvin's daughter, "Be gentle with your grandfather."

Calvin's daughter turned to her dad. "I'm sorry, Daddy. Francis never seems to behave these days. He just runs around making a mess and coming up with strange stories."

Calvin laughed and said, "Well now! That sound just like me when I was his age."

Calvin and his family chatted some more until a nurse said, "Sorry, but visiting hours are almost up."

Calvin's beloved family said good bye and promised to visit tomorrow. As they turned to leave Calvin said, "Francis. Come here for a second."

Francis came over to his grandfather's side, "What is it Gramps?"

Calvin reached over to the stuffed tiger on his bedside and held him out shakily to his grandson, who looked exactly as he did so many years ago. "This is Hobbes. He was my best friend when I was your age. I want you to have him."

"He's just a stuffed tiger." Francis said, eyebrows raised.

Calvin laughed, "Well, let me tell you a secret."

Francis leaned closer to Calvin. Calvin whispered, "If you catch him in a tiger trap using a tuna sandwich as bait he will turn into a real tiger."

Francis gasped in delighted awe. Calvin continued, "Not only that he will be your best friend forever."

"Wow! Thanks grandpa!" Francis said, hugging his grandpa tightly again.

"Francis! We need to go now!" Calvin's daughter called.

"Okay!" Francis shouted back.

"Take good care of him." Calvin said.

"I will." Francis said before running off after the rest of the family.

Calvin laid on his back and stared at the ceiling. The time to go was close. He could feel it in his soul. Calvin tried to remember a quote he read in a book once. It said something about death being the next great adventure or something like that. His eyelids grew heavy and his breathing slowed. As he went deeper into his final sleep he heard Hobbes, as if he was right next to him at his bedside. "I'll take care of him, Calvin..."

Calvin took his first step toward one more adventure and breathed his last with a grin on his face.

- u/samuraitiger19

#calvinandhobbes #comics #virals #billwatterson

El Salvador Mission Trip 2024

by Valerie Constantino

You are invited to come to El Salvador for an annual mission experience, August 1 - 6, 2024! Julie Jacks (Resurrection Lutheran Redondo Beach), along with Pastors Kristian and Anna-Kari in Chicago, have been leading delegations to accompany the Lutheran Church of El Salvador for 25 years. The Southwest California Synod is a "Companion Synod" with El Salvador. We walk alongside the Salvadorans as they support children to go to school, install solar panels, help build

churches, conduct medical campaigns, and participate in a peace march for human rights. This year's trip brochure can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/elsal2024>

For more information, contact Julie Jacks at jjjacks7651@aol.com Or if you would like to talk to someone in person, reach out to our very own Valerie Constantino, who is full of love and hope for our ministry partnership in El Salvador! valerie.constantino@gmail.com



Des Moines Food Bank - ThanksGIVING



March needs... Cup of Soup (Lipton), tuna or other canned meat

April needs... Granola bars and canned tomato product (low salt preferred)

May needs... Fruit cups and soap / shampoo (full size)

Servant opportunities available.
For more information call 206.878.2660.



Des Moines Area Food Bank

November 19, 2023 · 🌐

🌟 A Sunday Full of Giving: Grace Lutheran Church's Generous Contribution! 🌟

We're excited to share another behind-the-scenes glimpse at the Des Moines Area Food Bank!

Meet Val, a key member of the Des Moines Area Food Bank team. In this photo, Val diligently records the weights of numerous food donation boxes. These boxes, generously packed by the wonderful members of **Grace Lutheran Church** (Des Moines, WA) as a Thanksgiving offering, represent their amazing, ongoing contributions to our mutual cause.

Just after their Sunday morning service concluded, the community of Grace Lutheran Church came out in an incredible display of unified support—filling these boxes with nutritious food for those in need.

We want to extend our deepest appreciation to every single member of Grace Lutheran Church who contributed. Your efforts are a testament to what can be achieved when we come together to make a difference!

🕒 The Des Moines Area Food Bank is open for full or partial services Monday through Friday. (See our website for service hours.) But remember, our drivers, like Val, are out there seven days a week, ensuring that donations reach us safely and timely, ready to support our community.

🌟 Inspired by Grace Lutheran Church's example? Want to rally your group to this cause? Visit our website at www.myfoodbank.org for more information on starting a food collection drive and making a meaningful impact.

Together, we make a difference!

Lutheran World Relief Quilting

by Janet Labes



The Grace LWR Quilting group meets every Thursday morning in the Fellowship Hall to assemble mission quilts to be delivered to LWR. Join us any time you would like.

We are well on the way to reach the goal of 125 quilts to send in the spring shipment in early May. We've had 15-18 people show up at the sessions. More hands to pin, tie or sew the quilts will bring us even closer to the goal. There are several tasks to do and you don't need to know how to sew. It is also a great place for fellowship and fun.

If you cannot join on a Thursday morning, but could sew at home, we can provide fabrics or bundles of cut squares with directions for quilt tops.

Watch for an announcement of the next Quilt Blessing in April.

Nearly 195,000 quilts were sent by LWR in 2023. Grace Quilters are a small part of this number, but we know that each quilt brings comfort to a neighbor in need somewhere in the world. Quilts are a simple combination of fabric and thread that reaches out to people in their time of greatest need with a strong message of hope -- you are not alone.

Any questions about LWR Quilts and projects? Call Janet Labes at 206.870.4226.

Good News Crew - Lent at Home! - Praying with Jesus

by Pastor Rachel Swenson

This Lenten season, families are invited to spend some reflecting together, working through the following scripture passages and devotional questions that spend time with Jesus in prayer. Start with these devo questions and, if you would be blessed by it, stop by Pastor Rachel's office or the Welcome Center and pick up 'Lent in a Bag', a toolkit with more resources to help you and your family dive deeper into the following Bible stories. Most importantly - enjoy the journey!

Week 1 – Jesus Prayed Before His Baptism

Read together Luke 3:21-23b and then reflect on the following questions:

When has it helped you to hear you are loved?

When have you heard a voice encouraging you to do good things?

Pray together and give thanks for all the ways God names us as loved children of God.

Week 2 – Jesus Prayed Before Choosing the Twelve

Read together Luke 6:12-16 and then reflect on the following questions:

Why do you think Jesus prayed before choosing the 12?

What if we prayed before making major choices? Do you think it would make a difference?

Pray together, asking Jesus to be our guiding star when we're faced with major choices.

Week 3 – Jesus Prayed After Feeding the 5,000

Read together Matthew 14:13-23 and then reflect on the following questions:

What are some things that feed you, that help you feel excited and full of energy?

What is a way you can connect with God that makes you feel excited and full of energy?

Pray together, giving God thanks for energy and food and excitement and for being our source of all good things.

Week 4 – The Prayer Jesus Taught Us

Read together Luke 11:1-8 and then reflect on the following questions:

When do you pray the Lord's Prayer? What is your favorite part?

Are there other prayers you could pray that ask for similar things?

Pray the Lord's Prayer together, reflecting on your favorite parts.

Week 5 – Jesus Prays Before His Arrest

Read together Mark 14:32-41 and then reflect on the following questions:

How do you think Jesus felt in this moment? Why do you think he decided to pray right then?

When do you like to pray alone? When do you like to pray in a group?

What do you like about each? What do you not like about each?

Take turns naming different emotions Jesus may have felt that night. Then pray together, asking God to be with you when you feel those same feelings.



jesus
loves
you

Communion Class

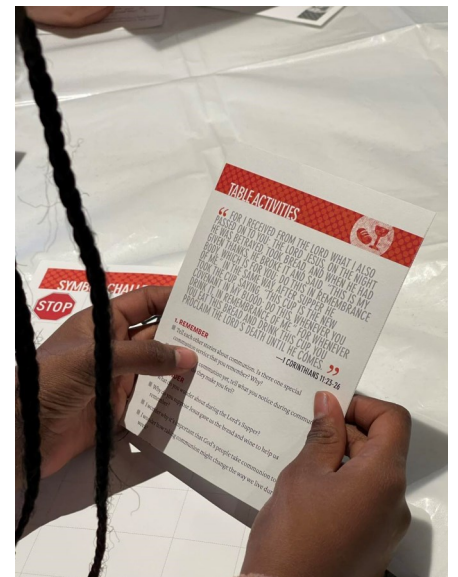
by Pastor Rachel Swenson

Communion Class

Join us! 5:30 pm, March 28 - Class and dinner with worship to follow

This year, we continue our practice of breaking bread together and learning about the story of Jesus' last supper with his friends. As we craft a meal out of bread, fruit, and cheese, we remember the ways in which Jesus gathered with others while he walked amongst us. We share stories about our experiences with communion, make and bake (and eat!) bread, and share the Biblical story together in unique and fun ways. Join in on the fun! We gather at 5:30 pm on Maundy Thursday, which falls on March 28 this year. Then after we've spent time together, stick around for Maundy Thursday service, a time when we recognize in worship the servant-leader we know as Jesus. While we can't promise you'll go home with flour-free clothes, we can promise you'll have fun, learning or re-learning the story of Christ's final meal with his disciples. You may have had communion every week of your life or you may have never done it before. Regardless, you are welcome to join in on the experience! Kids and families especially welcome as we work together to make this ancient story relevant and real for us all.

Some candid shots from last year's class



Palm / Passion Sunday Reflection

On Sunday, March 24, we worship together on Palm/Passion Sunday.

To prepare our hearts for this deeply meaningful time together we center on these words:

Starter Prayer: We shout Hosanna, a cry of praise and a cry for divine help. You save us Lord.
Thank you Jesus. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 21:1-11

What is Palm Sunday? Palm Sunday, also known as "Passion Sunday," marks the week that leads to Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection. It is called "Palm Sunday" because of what happened during this time in history.

[Matthew 21:1-11](#) tells us that Christ has His triumphal entry to Jerusalem on this day:

"Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me. And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them.'"

All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

"Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.'"

So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them. And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying:

"Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' Hosanna in the highest!"

And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?"

So the multitudes said, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee."

"Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' The King of Israel!"

This kind of welcome signifies a few things:

- 1) That they all knew Christ as the Messiah (see [Psalm 118:25-26](#))
- 2) That they recognized that Christ is King (see [2 Kings 9:13](#))
- 3) They all honored Him as both King and Messiah (see [Zechariah 9:9](#))

Now why should it be important to us today?

Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem signaled the start of the last week of His earthly ministry. In a few days' time He would be betrayed, scourged, mocked, and nailed to the cross to die -- only to rise again on the third day after His death. This is the week when we remember that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. This is the week when we are reminded that we can't save ourselves, but Christ saved us.

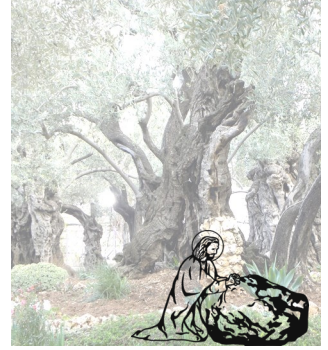


A Holy Week Reflection

by Jason Micheli

THE TRANSFIGURATION IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

In the garden, Jesus is confronted by two opposing wills that act in a hideous union.



Every year during Passover week, Jerusalem would be filled with approximately 200,000 Jewish pilgrims. Nearly all of them, like Jesus and his friends and family, would've been poor. Throughout that holy week, these hundreds of thousands of pilgrims would gather at table and temple and they would remember. They would remember how they'd once suffered bondage under another empire, and how God had heard their outrage and sent someone to save them.

They would remember how God had promised them, "I will be your God and you will be my people." Always.

They would remember how with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm God had delivered them from a Caesar called Pharaoh. Passover was a political powder keg, so every year Pontius Pilate would do his damndest to keep Passover in the past tense. At the beginning of Passover week, Pilate would journey from his seaport home in the west to Jerusalem, escorted by a military triumph, a shock-and-awe storm-trooping parade of horses and chariots and troops armed to the teeth and prisoners bound hand and foot. All of it led by imperial banners that dared as much as declared "Caesar is Lord."

So when Jesus, at the beginning of that same week, rides into Jerusalem from the opposite direction there could be no mistaking what to expect next. Deliverance from enemies. Defeat of them. Freedom. Exodus from slavery. How could there be any mistaking, any confusing, when Jesus *chooses* to ride into town — on a donkey, exactly the way the prophet Zechariah had foretold that Israel's King would return to them. Triumphant and victorious, just before he crushes their enemies. There could be no mistaking what to expect next. That's why they shout "Hosanna! Save us!" and wave palm branches as they do every year for the festival of Sukkot, another holy day in the fall when they recalled their exodus from Egypt into the wilderness and prayed for God to send them a Messiah. The only reason to shout Hosanna during Passover instead of Sukkot is if you believed that the Messiah for whom you have prayed has arrived.

There could be no mistaking what to expect next. That's why they welcome him with the words "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel" the very words with which God's People welcomed Solomon to the Temple. The same words Israel sang upon Solomon's enthronement. Solomon, David's son. Solomon, the King. There could be no mistake, no confusion, about what to expect next. Not when he lights the match and tells his followers to give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar (i.e., absolutely nothing). Don't forget, Jesus was carrying the coin in question in his pocket.

There could be no mistaking what to expect next. Not when he cracks a whip and turns over the Temple's tables as though he's dedicating it anew — just as David's son had done. Not when he takes bread and wine and with them makes himself the New Moses. And not when he gets up from the Exodus table, and leads his followers to, of all places, the Mount of Olives.

The Mount of Olives was ground zero. The front line. The place where the prophet Zechariah had promised that God's Messiah would initiate a victory of God's People over the enemy that bound them.

From the parody of Pilate's parade to the palm leaves, from the prophesied donkey to the shouts of hosanna, from Solomon's welcome to the exodus table to the Mount of Olives everyone in Jerusalem knew what to expect. There could be no mistaking all the signs.

They knew how God was going to use him. He would be David to Rome's Goliath. He would face down a Pharaoh named Pilate, deliver the message that the Lord has heard the cries of his People and thus says he: "Let my People go." As though standing in the Red Sea bed, he would watch Pilate and Herod and all the rest swallowed up in and drowned by God's righteousness. God's justice. They knew how God was going to use him. And when Jesus invites Peter, James, and John (the same three who'd gone with him to

Holy Week Reflection, continued

the top of Mt. Horeb where they beheld him transfigured into glory) to go with him to the top of the Mount of Olives these disciples probably expect a similar sight. To see him transfigured again. To see him charged with God's glory. To see him armed with it. Armed for the final and decisive battle. The battle that every sign and scripture from that holy week has led them to expect.

Except —there on the top of the Mount of Olives Jesus doesn't look at all as he had on top of that other mountain. Then, his face had shone like the sun. Now, it's twisted into agony. Then, they'd seen him dazzling white with splendor. Now, he's distraught with doubt and dread. Then, on top of that other mountain, Moses and the prophet Elijah had appeared on either side of him. Now, on this mountaintop, he's alone, utterly, already forsaken, alone except for what the prophet Isaiah called the 'cup of wrath' that's before him. Then, God's voice had torn through the sky with certainty "This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased." Now, God doesn't speak. At all.

So much so that theologian Karl Barth said that Jesus's prayer in the Garden doesn't even count as prayer because it's not a dialogue with God. It's a one-way conversation. It's not just that God didn't speak or answer back, God was entirely absent from him, as dark and silent to him as the whale's belly was to Jonah.

There, on the Mount of Olives, Peter, James, and John, with their half-drunk eyes, they see him transfigured again. This would-be Messiah who'd spoken bravely about carrying a cross, transfigured to the point where he's weak in the knees and terrified. This would-be Moses who'd stoically taken exodus bread and talked of his body being broken transfigured so that now he's begging God to make it only a symbolic gesture. This would-be King who can probably still smell the hosanna palm leaves transfigured until he's pleading for a Kingdom to come by any other means.

Peter and the sons of Zebedee, they see him transfigured a second time. From the teacher who'd taught them to pray "Thy will be done ..." to this slumped-over shadow of his former self who seems to pray against the Father's will.

Jesus had boldly predicted his betrayal and crucifixion. Now he's telling his disciples he's "deeply grieved and agitated." Or, as the Greek inelegantly lays it out there, he tells them he's "depressed and confused." Jesus essentially tells the three: "Remain here with me and stay awake, for I am so depressed I could die."

And then Jesus can only manage a few steps before he throws himself down on the ground, what Matthew describes as *ekthembeistai*, meaning to shudder in horror, stricken and helpless. He is, in every literal sense of the Greek, scared out of his mind. Or as the Book of Hebrews described Jesus here, *crying out frantically with great tears*. He is in the garden exactly as Delacroix depicted him: flat in the dirt, almost writhing, stretching out his arms, anguish in his eyes, his hands open in a desperate gesture of pleading.

God's incarnate Son twisted into a golem of doubt and despair. Transfigured. As though he's gone from God's own righteousness in the flesh to God's rejection of it.

Peter, James, and John, the other disciples there on the Mount of Olives, any of the other pilgrims in Jerusalem that holy week — they're not mistaken about what should come next. They weren't wrong to shout "Hosanna!" They're all correct about what to expect next. The donkey, the palm leaves, the Passover — it all points to it, they're right. They're all right to expect a battle. A final, once for all, battle. They're just wrong about the enemy. The enemy isn't Pilate or Herod, but the one Paul calls the enemy.

The Pharaoh to whom we're all — the entire human race — enslaved isn't Caesar but sin. Not your little "s" sins but sin with a capital "S," whom the New Testament calls the Ruler of this World, the power behind all the Pharaohs and Pilates and Putins. They're all correct about what to expect, but their enemies are all propped up by a bigger one.

A battle *is* what the Gospel wants you to see in Gethsemane. The Gospel wants you to see God initiating a final confrontation with Satan, the enemy, the powers, sin, death with a capital "D" the New Testament uses all those terms interchangeably, take your pick. But a battle *is* what you're supposed to see. Jesus says so himself: "Keep praying," he tells the three disciples in the garden, "not to enter *peiramós*," The time of trial. That's not a generic word for any trial or hardship. That's the New Testament's word for the final apocalyptic battle between God and the power of sin (cf. 1 Pet 4:12). The Gospels want you to see in the dark of Gethsemane the beginning of the battle anticipated by all those hosannas and palm branches.

Holy Week Reflection, continued

But it's not a battle that Jesus wages. Jesus becomes its wages. That is, the battle is waged in him. Upon him. From here on out, from Gethsemane to Golgotha, the will of the Father and the will of Satan mysteriously coincide in him: The will of sin to reject God forever by crucifying Jesus.

The will of the Father to reject sin forever by crucifying Jesus.

In the garden, Jesus is confronted by two opposing wills that act in a hideous union. In the garden, the line between good and evil inseparably blurs beyond recognition. Which way is the path of the righteous and which is the path that leads to Sheol? Before him lay nothing but the way of Godforsakeness.

That's the shuddering revulsion, the fear and trembling that overwhelms Jesus in Gethsemane: the realization breaking over him that the will of the Father will be done as the will of Satan is done. In him, upon him, "thy will be done" will be done for both of them, his Father and his enemy, on earth as in heaven *and* in hell.

But Jesus does not withdraw and flee to the western wilderness. He accepts that he will be the concrete and complete event of God's rejection of sin. He agrees to be made vulnerable to the power of sin and God's judgment of it. He consents to absorb the worse that we can do, as slaves to sin. And he consents to absorb the worst that God can do the worst that God will ever do. As Paul puts it in 2 Corinthians 5, "For our sake, God made him to be sin who knew no sin." He who was without sin was transfigured into sin.

When we are confronted about the tortures and God awful doings of this world, "What do Christians say?!" What do we say? Something trite about God's *love*?

Maybe because we've turned God's love into a cliché, or because we've so sentimentalized what the Church conveys in proclaiming "God loves you," but many people assume that Christians are naive about the dark reality of sin in the world. But we're a people who place a torture device on top of our buildings. We're not naive — neither about the cruelties of which we're capable, nor the dreadful seriousness God deals with those cruelties.

What do Christians say about the evil of the world? The dread, final, righteous, wrath-filled "No" God speaks to sin. And the nevertheless "Yes" God speaks to his enslaved sinful creatures. The "Yes" God in Christ speaks to drinking the cup of wrath to its last drops.

The apostle Paul says that in Christ God emptied himself, taking the form of a servant. In Gethsemane, Christ empties himself even of that. He empties himself completely, pours all of himself out such that Martin Luther says when Jesus gets up off the ground in Gethsemane there's nothing left of Jesus. There's nothing left of his humanity. He's an empty vessel; so that, when he drinks the cup of wrath he fills himself completely with our sinfulness.

Jesus isn't just a stand-in for a sinner like you or me. He isn't just a substitute for another. He doesn't simply become a sinner or *any* sinner. He becomes the greatest and the gravest of sinners. It isn't that Jesus dies an innocent among thieves. He dies as the worst sinner among them. The worst thief, the worst adulterer, the worst liar, the worst abuser, the worst criminal. Jesus swallows all of it. Drinks all of it down and, in doing so, draws into himself the full force of humanity's hatred for God.

He becomes our hatred for God. He becomes our evil. He becomes all of our injustice.

He becomes sin. Upon the cross Jesus does not epitomize or announce the Kingdom of God in any way. He becomes the concentrated reality of everything that stands against it. He is every Pilate and Pharaoh. He is every Herod and every Caesar and every Judas. Every downfall of humanity, All our greed. All our violence. Every ungodly act and every ungodly person. He becomes all of it. He becomes sin.

So that God can forsake it.

Forsake it.

For our sake. Amen.

Invite Someone - It Could Change Their Life Forever!

The Power of an Invite:

Why people came to church:

- 6-8% Came by own initiative
- 8-10% Liked the clergy
- 3-4% Had a need met by the church
- 1-2% Were evangelized
- 75-85% Were invited by a friend

The average is that 83% of people came to church because a friend invited them to come.



Holy Week

Palm / Passion Sunday - March 24

Worship @ *8:30 and 11:00 am (Sanctuary)

Breakfast served @ 9:30 - 11:00 am (Fellowship Hall)

Maundy Thursday - March 28

Communion Class & Dinner @ 5:30 pm (Fellowship Hall)

Worship @ *7:00 pm (Sanctuary)

Good Friday - March 29

Worship @ *7:00 pm (Sanctuary)

Community Egg Hunt - March 30

10:00 am - Noon (Grace)

Ages birth - 5th grade...Rain or Shine - Bring a basket!

March 31 - Easter Sunday

Worship @ 8:00, *9:30 and *11:00 am (Sanctuary)

*Livestreamed



Easter Sunday Resurrection Worship!

Our theme for our festive worship this year will be: “Wondrous Encounters – Resurrection!”
 We pray that everyone who gathers here on Easter, that their hearts would be filled to overflowing!
 He is risen! He is risen indeed!



As you prepare your heart for the blessed joy of Easter, here is a short devotion outline to get you started:

Memory Verse: I Thessalonians 5:11 “Encourage one another and build each other up!”

Starter Prayer: When terror and amazement seize us, may we be full witnesses to the resurrection! Amen.

Prayers of the Haitian People: Lord, I know my garden doesn’t grow or produce unless I work it and visit it. So, please Lord, work and visit the garden of my heart. I want to produce for You. Amen.

Senyè,

Mwen konnen ke jaden mwen
 p’ap poue ni donnen
 si m’ pa travay li e voye je sou li.

Donk, tanpri Senyè,
 travay e voye je sou jaden kè mwen.

Mwen vie donnen pou ou.

Lord,

I know my garden doesn’t
 grow or produce
 unless I work it and visit it.

So, please Lord,
 work and visit the garden of my heart.

I want to produce for You.



Scripture Readings:

I Corinthians 15:1-11

Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain. For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have

died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

Mark 16:1-8

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?” When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.” So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Question: How will you be a witness to the power of the resurrection in your life this coming season?

Hospitality Ministry Spotlight - Our Fabulous Usher Team!

by Pastor Chad Johnson

Every year at GLC, we host over 122 worship services. That is a whole lot of activity right there! In order for those worship experiences to go on well, we have Usher Teams that serve as hospitality ministers.

What does an usher do?

They arrive 15 minutes earlier than the rest to get ready, they make sure offering plates are on the altar, that the cry room is open and ready, they hand out the week-end news, greet at the front door, take weekly attendance, assist with receiving the offering and ushering people forward for weekly communion, assist new folks in feeling welcome in our space, keep eyes open for health and safety for all those in our space, they clean up any remaining items in the pews, and above all, make all of us feel at home at GLC.

Who can serve in this role?



Everybody! And that is the hope. We have key leads in this ministry to get us organized but we are in need of more folks willing to serve in this way. It is a great way to worship – connect – and serve! You get to know more folks here at Grace and you get to share your joy and welcome with all people. **If you want to make a BIG difference in growing our congregation, this is a ministry that does just that.**

THANK YOU!

Be sure to thank the wonderful folks who serve weekly. A shout out to Don, Roger, Nic, TJ, Doug, Delores, Brett, and Brendon, for your weekly service and to all those who jump in and serve throughout the year. Your hospitality and care of this congregation is amazing!



Confirmation Class - We Are Freed For, Not Just From

by Pastor Rachel Swenson

Did you know that performing puppet shows for money is punishable by a fine in Indiana? Or that it is illegal to lie down and fall asleep in a cheese factory in South Dakota? Or, perhaps the best yet, that no one may carry an ice cream cone in their back pocket on a Sunday in Georgia?

contexts that make them less Georgian horse thieves would services with ice cream in odd to many of us! And we up breaking one of these odd states. In Confirmation this grace, about Lutheranism, Luther. He too was worried rules he was worried he didn't



supposed to know what God wanted him to do in his life if God was constantly punishing him for messing up? Eventually, through much spiritual wrestling and theological tangles, Luther realized that God's grace, poured out in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, covered the ramification of every rule broken throughout time. Through Jesus, Luther realized we are set free from the worry of breaking rules. Not only are we set free from that worry and judgement, but equally important, we are set free for something even greater – love and service of neighbor. Yes, we are freed from the punishment of all the harm we do to ourselves, to others, and to our relationship with God. We are freed for love, goodness, and service – in short, we are freed for the way of Jesus. Which means, when we do mess up and harm, intentional or not, our relationship with ourselves, others or God, we have a way to come back, to ask for forgiveness, to seek restoration and reconciliation. We are freed from those things that hold us down, hold us back, and we are freed for a flourishing, abundance, relationship. Thanks be to God!

While each of these weird laws have odd (apparently in the early 1900s, lure horses tied up outside church their back pockets), they still sound may, without even realizing it, end rules if we were to visit one of those year, we've been talking a lot about and about our name sake, Martin about breaking rules, especially even know about yet. How was he

Young Adult Retreat - April 19 - 21

Young Adult Retreat – On Our Way

“I’m on my way’ means if I fail at something, it’s not evidence to an argument that I’m a failure. It just means I’m on my way... I’m learning as I go.”

– Scott Erickson, @scottthepainter

Transitioning into a new chapter of life is always hard. We struggle when we graduate elementary and enter the scary world of junior high, we feel lost when we move on to the long halls and complicated relationships of high school, and then even more so when those long halls become familiar and we leave them behind for the larger, scarier, wider world. Being a young adult means living through a lot of transitions – beginning a career, leaving behind the familiar, growing in our independence when we’re

not really sure we’re even qualified to be a “real” adult. And in those transitions, it can be easy to lose sight of God’s calling in our lives, the purpose that each of us is blessed with. So for our Young Adult Retreat this year, we’re going to focus on just that.

How do we listen to God’s calling while we’re on our way, while we’re figuring it out, while we’re stumbling and learning and growing?

Join us for a weekend of worship, goofiness, and a deep dive into God’s call in and on our lives. We’ll explore identity, calling, and how to live them out in our daily lives. We’ll share meals together, get vulnerable together, laugh together, sing together, and generally spend time surrounded in God’s love so that we may feel equipped to feel that love surrounding us in all we do. Registration is due beginning of March, so reach out to Pastor Rachel today!

Young Adult Retreat

April 19-21, 2024

Ages 18-30

Registration due March 4

**Contact Pastor Rachel at pastorrachel@gotgrace.com
for more info and registration**



Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Update

by Pastor Salvador Cossio

After 10 weeks in a new class called Clinical Pastoral Education, along with new classmates that do ministry in different parts of the country, learning new ways to study and having a requirement for 300 practice hours at Judson Park, this is what I can say is the ongoing result of that special time; a growing awareness of God's work in my life, community, and the awareness of God's revealing presence is in every person we interact with, in every detail of creation and in many other ways that we may not even recognize at the moment. God's lovely presence was revealed in every interaction that I had at Judson Park, in pastoral care visits and with the interactions with my professor and classmates. In all of this process, when I thought I was learning how to provide better care, I was being taken care of by God.

I am sure that this ongoing growing awareness of the presence of

God in our lives helps us to be aware that life's precious moments are all the moments. When we are spending time with God, with our families, friends, and neighbors and when we meet new people.

The CPE journey has helped me to reflect on myself; how I communicate and gained clarity regarding my strengths and weaknesses. It helped me to be more aware of my emotions and this is helpful in order to be a better care provider. This journey is a reminder that God's mystery is in both ends – the care provider and the patient.

God's work on this earth happens when we sit down together and care for each other.

Thank you for being apart of this journey.

GLC Spanish Bible Study

by Veronica Zermeno

El tiempo que hemos estudiado las escrituras y reflexionado en el mensaje del evangelio ha sido un gran refrigerio, en el que como comunidad Latina, nos hemos abrazado. Dios ha hecho de este compañerismo una comunidad que ha empezado a caminar junta para buscar promover el Amor de Dios en nuestra comunidad.

Youth Ministry

by Pastor Salvador Cossio

Youth Ministry is a whole church ministry. Our youth meet every Wednesday, have retreats, are improving in community services, and have a desire to share God's love with their friends and neighbors. Come and join us for some of our activities, and you will find joy serving and creating a multigenerational ministry where you have the opportunity to invest time, skills and be blessed by our kiddos. Our kiddos are wonderful teachers that show us God's pure love on this earth.

Next serving opportunities:

Every Wednesday at youth group,
(join us in person and share ideas)

Lazy F Retreat: May 24 - 27

Summer Camp: August 11 - 16

Questions? Contact me at 206.489.6130 or
by email at pastorsalvador@gotgrace.com

Introducing our Summer Intern... Jamie Colbert



Hi, my name is Jamie! I have gone to Grace for 13 years. The youth group has had a big impact in my life. It has given me a safe place to be myself and has supported me through all stages of life. This inspired me to become a Youth Director so that I can make a difference in kid's lives and their faith journey. I am super excited to start this journey as the summer intern, and help give these kids that same opportunity of love and fun.

Youth Winter Retreat



Interfaith Leadership Class

by Pastor Salvador Cossio



The last week of January, I attended semi-nary classes in person. During that time, I had an Interfaith Leadership class and one on preaching. At the Interfaith class, I was able to visit four temples that practice different faiths, and it was a time of enrichment. My classmates and I saw God's presence in all the temples we visited. All the faith leaders received us with kindness, love and a lot of joy for being able to be together. They shared meals and stories with us, and we were at God's table. It was so beautiful that I find it hard to have the exact words to describe how phenomenal this time was. And the best part is having new friends to visit.

Preaching is a class that will not end until next August however, it will be an ongoing development throughout life and ministry. This class requires the help of all of you. Please share with me how God's spirit spoke to you in all the sermons. Your words of wisdom are part of my homework. There are weekly assignment from January until the next class in June. One of the requirements are that as a congregation we build sermons together. A few weeks ago, the youth group and the adulting group helped me to build a sermon. It was a fun time where we as a church were able to seek God's wisdom.

Looking forward to connecting with all of you!



Thirsty Thursday Podcast

by Pastor Chad Johnson



Isaiah 55:1 – Hey there! All who are thirsty, come to the water!

A series of Bible studies focused on the Abundant Life found when living into the life of Jesus!

Jump into this series that will start on Thursday, April 18, during the Easter season and in our run up to the summer season. Pastor Chad will take you in a deep dive into 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Yup, those rarely looked at short letters of Paul toward the tail end of our Bibles.

Spend some time on the podcast and then gather with others to process together.....or listen during your commute..... during your shower or during your last sips of teas for the day. I pray you will be blessed a little more on your journey of faith as you spend Thirsty Thursdays in Thessaloniki with the Thessalonians.

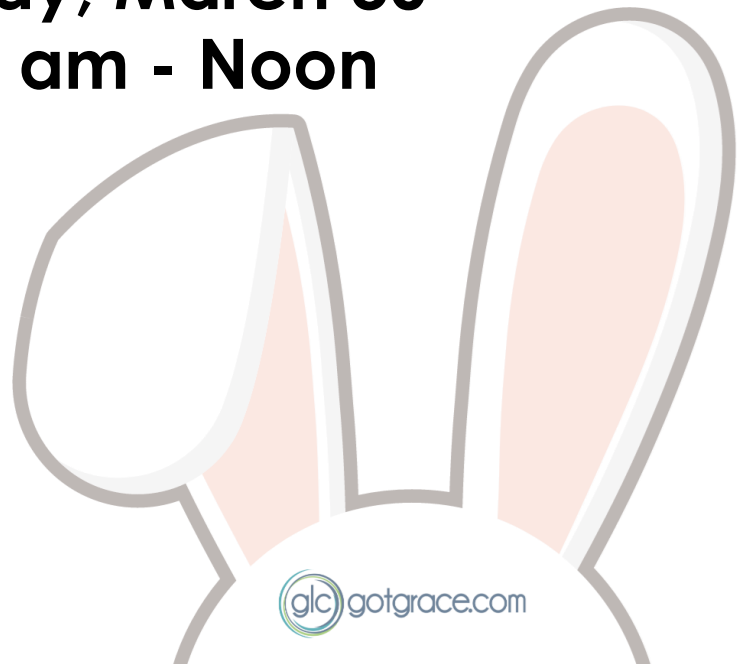
FREE Community Easter Egg Hunt

**Saturday, March 30
10:00 am - Noon**



at
Grace Lutheran Church

Rain or Shine! Bring a basket!
Birth to 5th Grade



Sunday Adult Faith Formation Schedule

April 7 – (Spring Break Sunday – no Faith Formation)

April 14 – Refugee Resettlement Support at GLC

Join in our discussion series as Tessa Krippaehne shares about the joy of and challenges of refugee resettlement. We are getting ready to host another family very soon and this will ignite the spirit within us as we move forward together.

April 21– Rooted and Rising Celebration Breakfast

We will host a celebration breakfast as we give updates to the work of Rooted & Rising and how your giving is making an impact both within the congregation and out there in the larger world. The breakfast will be good and the conversation will be blessed. Be there!

April 28 – Children/Youth/and Family Awareness Sunday

Come join in conversation and hear about the work of the Children, Youth, and Family ministries at Grace. All kids are our kids and there is joy in bringing life to each of these ministries. Learn about what is new, what has been adapted, and what is to come in the year ahead.

May 5 – Amazing Grace Sunday & Refreshments

A wonderful Sunday of celebration through worship and music and hospitality. You will be inspired and nurtured in your faith!

May 12 – Chocolate Sunday!

This is a youth fundraiser event and all proceeds go to support the summer ministries. There are special items that have been made and will be sold at this event. Thank you for your support!

May 19 – Confirmation Sunday Breakfast Party & Faith Fair

A great weekend to celebrate the faith journey of our confirmands. A special event between services will be hosted where you will see the projects the youth have completed, all while enjoying some food and fun.

May 26 – Worship Times Change 8:30 am and 10:00 am (no Faith Formation)

Amazing Grace Sunday - May 5!

by Geoffrey Boers, Co-Minister of Grace Choir



"While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. The believers who had come with Peter were AMAZED that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out— even on the gentiles!" Acts 10:44-45

These astounding words begin one of the lessons for May 5, the final Sunday of the Easter season, and get us ready for the blast of the Holy Spirit that will be celebrated the next week on Pentecost. The tiny growing church of that time was AMAZED that the grace of God had poured out—even on the outsider gentiles! What a great text for us as we will worship that day, Amazing Grace Sunday: A musical celebration of the movement of the Spirit among us and the grace that abounds here at Grace Lutheran Church.

After last year's presentation of the Song of Mark, many of you asked "can you do this again next year?" This "Amazing Grace Sunday" will be a similar worship experience through music — presented by all the musical groups here at Grace! Our Grace Choir, Gospel Band, Kids of the Kingdom, Bell choirs, the new organ, and YOU will fill the hour with music, word, meal, and be a celebration of God's work, Christ's heart and hands, and the power of the Spirit that make GLC so amazing. **It will be a time for our whole community to join together at 9:30 am in one faith-filled and big-hearted voice. Refreshments and fellowship follows at 10:45 am in the Fellowship Hall.** Mark your calendars, May 5 is Amazing Grace Sunday!



Our old organ lives on. Thank you Al Vraspir for repurposing it into a beautiful bench located in the Fireside Room.

FAITH FAIR - May 19

by Pastor Rachel Swenson

GLC's First Faith Fair – Coming this Spring!

This year, we are embarking on a new thing! Instead of a Faith Statement, confirmands will complete and, on Confirmation Sunday, present a faith project, something that speaks to who God has called them to be as a servant leader.

What's a faith project?

Great question! A faith project is something that helps the people around us understand our relationship with God and with our faith. Ultimately, a faith project answers the questions, "Why does faith matter to me? Why is God important in my life?"

Each confirmand gets the chance to choose the topic of their own faith project and we're greatly looking forward to all the variety of projects that we may see this May! Some examples may include serving at the Des Moines Food Bank for six weeks in a row and presenting on the experience; starting a book club with other friends around a faith-based book or reading a secular book from a faith lens; being a servant leader in a new way at church for a month and documenting the experience; writing a faith statement and then discussing it with at least three grown-ups; and so many more. The sky is the limit!

Then comes the most exciting part - Faith Projects will be presented at our very first Faith Fair!

On Confirmation Sunday between services, confirmands will have their presentations set up in the Fellowship Hall and will share their faith projects similar to a school science fair. Members of the community (that's you!) will stop by the displays and ask questions of the confirmands about what they learned or what was most interesting about their project. Presentations will last for only a part of that faith formation hour, as we will also have some time to share in refreshments, celebrations, and some goofiness.

We're seriously looking forward to a day full of joy and faith and fun as we celebrate our confirmands together!



Join us for a Sunday full of faith and fun!

May 19

Faith Fair begins at 9:45 am

**Confirmands will present a sentence or two
on their project as well as their chosen
Bible verse at both services.**

Rite of Confirmation will occur at our 11:00 am service

Lydia, Phoebe, Priscilla - One Hit Wonders?

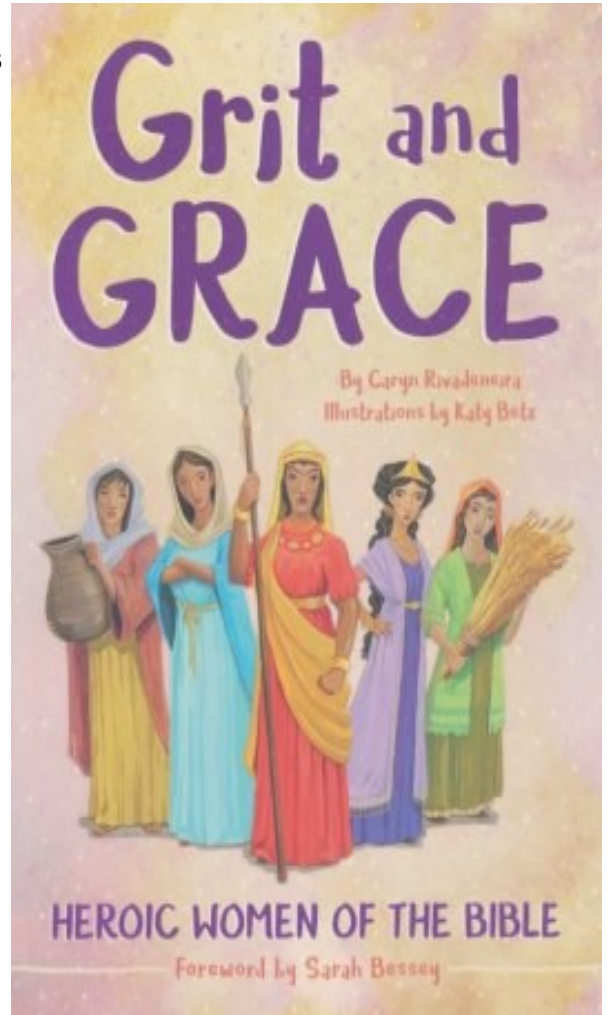
by Pastor Rachel Swenson

One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. ~ Acts 16:14

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church in Cenchreae. I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of his people and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been the benefactor of many people, including me. Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. ~ Romans 16:1-4

I read a book recently that looks at women in the Bible, trying to envision more of their stories when we are so often left with only glimpses into their lives. Among the 17 characters in the book, Lydia, Phoebe, and Priscilla are listed together and their story makes fun of the idea that they are treated like one hit wonders in the Bible. They're mentioned, but not nearly as much as their male counterparts who are also spreading the good news after Jesus ascends to heaven. And while we know very little about all three women, they represent something greater than three, isolated lives – their presence, their witness, represent the generations of faithful women who have spread the good news through word and deed. Thousands of women who shaped history but whose names we'll never know.

While we may all wish to hear more of these ladies and what good they did in service of God and neighbor, we give thanks that their stories existed at all, just as we give thanks for all the stories that have existed and have been forgotten over time. As you reflect on the little we know about these women, reflect also on the faithful women in your life. How have they impacted your faith? How have they influenced your life? God has a plan for each of us, even if our names aren't recorded in the great records of history. God has a purpose for us all, even if history only remembers us as one hit wonders. May we learn from Lydia, Phoebe and Priscilla that the work is great and God is ready to put us all to work for the good of all of creation!



Pastor Rachel has a copy of the book mentioned, [Grit and Grace: Heroic Women of the Bible](#) by Caryn Rivadeneira, if you ever want to read more about our faith foremothers!

Faith and Everyday Life

by staff members of Lutheran Counseling Network

PSALM 23 (NKJV), "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness, for his name's sake." Who is this



shepherd? At the outset, He is the one who does not leave his sheep in lack. This wonderful shepherd Lord knows intimately the sheep over which he has charge and what their needs are. In the vernacular of the counseling profession, I liken this to parental "attunement", that special attentiveness of a mother to her child, who comes to not only anticipate her baby's needs, but to know from her baby's cries and behavior if the baby is hungry, tired, upset or content. And what parent doesn't know the satisfaction that comes from soothing and providing rest for an upset child? The same is true of our shepherd God who desires peace and rest for each one of us. It may have been a long time for some of us to consider this Shepherd as concerned for our needs. Or perhaps life's road has been rugged, and we learned long ago to shelve our needs, or have little expectation of them being met. Having needs is being vulnerable, and being vulnerable can be risky. Consider this shepherd Lord who cares that we be able to lie down, to rest, who gives restoration to our very soul. God gives leading and guidance, and provides righteousness. Meditate on this Psalm; soak in this revelation of our provider God in verse after verse. Open your heart and mind to hear God's heart speaking to you.

Audrey was a challenge. She came into Sunday School like a tiny tsunami – rushing around the room, disrupting lessons, hiding behind a barrier and distracting the other children. I responded as best I could, attempting to redirect her, enticing her into sitting with the others, setting boundaries with firmness and kindness. Nothing was working. One day I watched Casey as she peeked under the barrier at Audrey, asking her to come out. "You can sit with me," Casey gently invited. As the rest of us watched with amazement, Audrey crawled out from under the barrier. She sat right next to Casey. And later, in our prayer circle, she sat in the bigger girl's lap. Casey seemed to understand what Audrey needed; an invitation, an offer to stay close, a way into the community. Little by little, with Casey's help, Audrey joined our class and began to participate. Later Audrey wrote this prayer: "To God, I open my whole self. To breathe (stet), to pray, to be holy (stet). Listen to God and be safe. You have the croge (stet) to do it. Amen." Casey had opened a way for Audrey to come into our community and into relationship with God. And in her prayer, Audrey seemed to be opening the way for others. This is Jesus' way of invitation.



Romans 8:26 (NRSV), "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words." In my estimation, it is impossible to journey through this life without experiencing at some point an absence of words or spiritual energy to cope with our pain. Those moments - or even seasons - of loss, despair, numbness can leave us feeling isolated from the divine and from one another, feeling increasingly immobile and hopeless. Although the discomfort can become excruciating, these times are actually an invitation to lean into the Spirit as well as for God to reach out and into us. It is not about the "right" prayer. It is not about the "right" behavior. It is not about getting God to listen. **For the Spirit is already present in our grief, anger, loneliness - even our disbelief.** "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness..." As a young adult, I found myself in a difficult situation. I suddenly felt far from God's attention, affection and ultimately God's grace. "...For we do not know how to pray as we ought..." Many tears were shed, many journal pages filled with self-loathing and hopelessness. One afternoon after

an exhausting shift at work, I laid down for a nap. And I dreamt. God and I were alone in the middle of the vast universe. I shielded my face, stomach in knots, seeking a way out of God's presence. But God simply stood before me... and wept. No words were exchanged. God wept with me, not because of disappointment but because my pain was also God's pain. God joined with my tears, leaving my despair without any purpose. Be encouraged in your weakness. You are profoundly known and profoundly loved. Although your story is different than mine, God's Spirit will pursue you to the ends of the earth, regardless of feelings and circumstances. Those will come and go. But the Spirit is ever present and "intercedes with sighs too deep for words" on your behalf.



Sundays at Grace



Guest Pastor,
Nisar Stephen





Grace Lutheran Church
22975 24th Avenue South
Des Moines, WA 98198

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Spring Schedule...

Sunday Worship 8:30 and 11:00 am

Online Worship 10:00 am

Monthly calendars and weekly bulletins are available at: gotgrace.com/announcements

Wednesdays in Lent

March 6, 13 & 20

Supper Church & Holden Evening Prayer Worship @ 3:00 pm & 6:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Afternoon snacks follows 3:00 pm service and an evening meal seating begins at 6:00 pm.

Holy Week

March 24 - Palm Sunday

Worship @ *8:30 am & 11:00 am in the Sanctuary.
Breakfast available at 9:30 - 11:00 am in the Fellowship Hall.

March 28 - Maundy Thursday

Communion Class & Dinner @ 5:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall.
Worship @ *7:00 pm in the Sanctuary.

March 29 - Good Friday

Worship @ *7:00 pm in the Sanctuary.

March 30 - Free Community Easter Egg Hunt

Rain or Shine! (10:00 - Noon)
Birth to 5th Grade - Bring a basket!

March 31 - Easter Sunday

Worship @ 8:00, *9:30 & *11:00 am in the Sanctuary.

Free Community Dinners

Second Tuesday of the month @ 5:00 - 6:00 pm.

March 12, April 9 & May 14 (All welcome - invite a friend!)

Rooted & Rising Celebration

Sunday, April 21 both services
(Celebration breakfast 9:30 - 11:00 am)

Confirmation Sunday & Faith Fair

May 19 both services (Celebration breakfast 9:30 - 11:00 am)

*Livestreamed services

SAVE
the
DATES

Amazing
GRACE
SUNDAY, MAY 5 @ 9:30 AM