



#howiserve

Grace Lutheran Church



Serve and Lead Together

Welcome to Lent 2019!

Our focus for this season continues our emphasis on **S.A.L.T. Serve and Lead Together**. We've deemed this the **Year of the Servant**, and we have been weaving thoughts of servanthood and leadership into all that we have been doing this year.

Beginning with the congregational reading of the book, **The Servant** by James C. Hunter, we've read, shared, struggled, discussed and celebrated what it can mean to live the life of a servant – a servant of Jesus Christ.

What difference can we make in the world? What difference can we make in the life of someone we pass by in our day-to-day lives? What does the life of a servant really and truly look like?

The word Lent actually stems from a word that means "*spring*" and "*to lengthen*." This is the time of year when the days indeed begin to lengthen as we long for the new life that spring brings. For many people, the season of Lent is a time of "giving up something." The intention of "giving up something" is to free up more time to spend in reflecting on our lives as followers of Jesus.

This year, during the season of Lent, we'd like to change it up a bit. Rather than "giving up something" let's add something! Let's add the focus of living and loving life as a servant to our 40 days of Lent.

How can we renew our faith and commitment during these next 40 days?

How can we humble ourselves and serve others in new ways?

How can we reflect the gift of grace that we have received, given so freely from a God who loves us... just the way we are?

We hope you'll join us on this journey through the next 40 days... and that when we come out on the side of the resurrection, we will all be changed!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Pastor John".

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Pastor Chad".

A word cloud of positive attributes in shades of blue. The words are arranged in a roughly rectangular shape, with some words appearing larger than others. The words include: excellence, patience, howiserve, love, share, encouragement, hospitality, attitude, listen, prayer, acceptance, awareness, care, diligent, handinhand, empathy, understanding, and humble.

excellence

patience

howiserve

love

share

encouragement

hospitality

attitude

listen

prayer

acceptance

awareness

care

diligent

handinhand

empathy

understanding

humble

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Al Vraspir

God's heart. Our hands. grace in ACTION.

For those who volunteer on our local grace in ACTION projects, the stories we share have deeply impacted us. One of the volunteers sent me a note of thanks for being able to participate and stated ***"We get far more from a few hours of labor than those who enjoy the fruits of our work"***.

On one home we built a ramp for a wheelchair bound woman who had to be carried down her stairs several times a week for medical appointments. She was terrified by this experience and there were times where the persons carrying her were not physically capable and had to call 911 for assistance. The smile on her face for her first trip down the new ramp was a blessing to all of us who worked on the project.

There are also many yard work projects that we have completed because the yards were out of compliance with city ordinances and neighbors were complaining. Often these people are suffering with health issues or physical limitations.

The way we serve through grace in ACTION is often directed at a physical problem but often the most important thing we do is touch the hearts of those who are hurting.

You will be enriched in every way for great generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God; for the rendering of this service not only supplies the wants of the saints but also overflows in many thanksgivings to God. II Corinthians 9: 11 – 12

**Reaching out to others with God's grace
is never about judgment.**

God's heart. Our hands. grace in ACTION.

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Debbie Trafton O'Neal

To talk about serving can be hard. It's hard for so many of us to even want to share, as it can seem so much like we are bragging or lifting ourselves up.

It is easy to think about the ways we serve in our church – and it may be even easier to actually serve there. It's easy to commit to serving on a Ministry Team, or to volunteer to read for a worship service, or to help assemble newsletters for mailing. Don't get me wrong – I truly know how much the church depends on servant leaders to take on all the tasks necessary to keep things running smoothly. *(And if you are one of those who serve at Grace, please don't stop!)*

But serving outside the church walls? Well, that can be a bit harder. We really have to put ourselves out there if we want to serve outside of our comfortable church community; and in doing so, we are more vulnerable.

In my thinking about servant leadership most recently, I've wondered about how my serving OUTSIDE the walls of Grace may actually have a bigger impact. Does my serving OUTSIDE the walls of Grace help others that may not have been helped? Does my serving OUTSIDE the walls of Grace reflect an image of Christ's love that others may never have seen? Does my serving OUTSIDE the walls of Grace share God's love, no strings attached? Does my serving OUTSIDE the walls of Grace bless someone else?

I love what The Message version of the Bible has to say in 1 Peter 3: 8-12:

Summing up: Be agreeable, be sympathetic, be loving, be compassionate, be humble. That goes for all of you, no exceptions. No retaliation. No sharp-tongued sarcasm. Instead, bless — that's your job, to bless. You'll be a blessing and also get a blessing. Whoever wants to embrace life and see the day fill up with good, Here's what you do: Say nothing evil or hurtful; Snub evil and cultivate good; run after peace for all your worth. God looks on all this with approval, listening and responding well to what he's asked; But he turns his back on those who do evil things.

1 Peter 3: 8-12

I try to live by “**treating others the way I would like to be treated.**” I'm not always successful at it. Sometimes I downright fail. When I do? I dust myself off and try again.

Will you join me?

Dale and I were indeed blessed to be able to go to Uganda again this year and help the less fortunate. The project of making feminine pads for the girls was very successful. In teaching the moms how to make the pads, the girls will not miss a week of school every month as they have done in the past. We were also blessed to be able to teach a second group in Kampala as well. Now these girls will be attending a class to learn how to make these items for themselves, sharing what they learned with others.

Dale was in his element as he helped people set up computer labs in schools, and offer training in basic computer use.

God has blessed us with good health and the ability to help others in a small way. We pray that we can continue to serve in many other ways as well.

We bless your name, Lord, in all you have done for us. We praise your name with unceasing for the joy we feel in helping those less fortunate than we are. Amen.

You yourself know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the need of my companions. In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

Acts 20:34-35



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Joani Dawson

Well, this is hard for me to begin! I don't want it to seem that I am bragging but I love Grace Lutheran Church so much!

I felt that I was a part, that I belonged, from the very first time I went to church. My friend, Barbara Ferguson-Osborn, had asked me to go when I was going to need something to do when I retired from Alaska Airlines. She said to me, "Well Grace will give you something to do!"

So I came to Grace. I started in a Bible study right away which I really like. Then the very first wonderful thing were I got to serve was holding babies at the MOPS group! I had such a great time, that after one year I started serving with the 2-4 year olds. I really loved that, and was surprised how much those little ones wanted to do in craft activities. I had so much fun for 3 years. Then Barbara invited me to go to Jamaica on a mission trip. Most of my family and friends thought I was not well enough, I had several strokes one to two years before, but I stood my ground!

Going on a mission trip was the best thing I have ever done and I think everyone should go on a mission to a third world county. It truly opens your eyes up, and the people you meet are amazing. Often with very little of their own, they are so happy and generous. On our trip, they made all three meals in a tiny non-air conditioned room, while it was so hot I thought I was dying! But these ladies were singing, praising the Lord and loving all of us, even in the heat.

I loved the whole time I was there. We had a Bible study program and games for all the kids. And the children were so great, with very little toys and possessions, they still had so much fun! We felt the children loved us so much. Anyway, when we came home I just wanted to sell my condo and move down there, but I couldn't do that. The day I came back to church, it was time for Vacation Bible School and I fell in love with that.

VBS has been my favorite way of serving. I have had many years of loving that service every summer, or really anything Kathy has found for me to do with children. I also really love the kidREACH program with the leaders helping the children with their homework or anything the kids need help with. The kids that are involved are Grades 1-5 grade and I got to be with one wonderful boy for all of the years he was part of kidREACH. Then, a couple years ago when we were wrapping presents at the Commons for the Des Moines Food Bank, Enrique's mom and sister came by. They are so nice, and they came over and we cried a little and she took my phone number. Enrique called me when I got home and we had a really nice visit, so I guess you can tell how much all the servant focus means to me!

I want to let everyone know how wonderful Grace Lutheran Church has been for me, and I pray the Lord lets me be involved with the Graceful Seniors until I am with him!

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Jim Morrison

I am a Vietnam Veteran who served four years in the United States Army. I serve today by helping other veterans and their causes. I have been a life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for over 40 years and have been the Quartermaster of Burien Post 4314 for 18 years.

The story I would like to share is my involvement with the **Northshore Veterans Memorial**. I grew up in Woodinville and graduated from Bothell High School in 1964. Our class lost two of our classmates to the Vietnam War; one, Charles Slusser, was my best friend. I made a pledge to myself when he died in 1969 that I would help to keep his memory alive so his sacrifice would not be forgotten.

About two and a half years ago Parl Guthrie, a fellow graduate and Vietnam veteran, and I met with the Superintendent of the Northshore School District and requested that a memorial be erected at the entrance to Pop Keeney Stadium honoring all Northshore School District Alumni and students who gave their lives while serving in the United States Military during an armed conflict or while performing their mission while on active duty.

After two years of bi-weekly meetings in Bothell to listen to all sides and all opinions, research to make sure all eligible veterans were included on the memorial and that there were no zoning or other issues, the Northshore School District Board of Directors gave their approval for the memorial in May 2018.

All we needed to do was raise the \$25,000 needed to erect and maintain the memorial as it was to be funded 100% by the community. Working with our VFW Posts, social media, Northshore students, local fundraising events and the Northshore business community, we were able to raise the full amount by Veterans Day 2018. We currently have a total of \$29,575 and will use the excess as an endowment for future maintenance and upkeep.

The granite has been ordered and **we will have our dedication ceremony on Memorial Day, May 27, 2019**. This memorial not only honors our veterans, it also honors the families who lost loved ones who are remembered on the memorial and the Northshore community. We hope the memorial brings a deeper understanding and appreciation of the sacrifice made by veterans from the Northshore School District to current and future students.



Mission accomplished and a fifty-year pledge kept.

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Kent Goodrich

As one of the mission trip leaders for **Reaching Out With Hope**, I have the opportunity to prepare new team members, discover their skills or interests and how they would like to serve on a project. Then I guide and serve them during what, for many, is their first experience in Africa -- maybe even their first mission trip.

A common reaction for many is the realization that there is a massive amount of need in villages in Africa. This often leads to the thoughts: ***“How can I possibly contribute or make a difference with such huge issues and problems?”***

We on the team experienced those same thoughts and doubts as we were starting out.

What we have come to realize is that God does not expect us to cure disease or end poverty or hunger in the world. We are simply to use our God-given gifts and interests to serve his children in need and to “feed my sheep”. This may involve projects in a single village, or helping just one person in need, or maybe improving the future for a child. These acts often will have an effect for generations to come, effects we may never see.

**Maybe we can't change the world,
but we can serve one village
or even just one person.**

**We can be God's hands and
feet in the world.**

***Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.
Hebrews 13:2***

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Becky Grall

Do the Hokey Pokey

How many times in life do we just dip our toe in the water and not dive in wholeheartedly?

Or watch from the sidelines even when we know the fun to be had by joining the game?

It feels so much better to use grandma's good dishes, shower with the fancy soap, or burn the beautiful candle you were given! Why do we hesitate to do it?

This life on earth is such a gift, a snapshot of opportunities to share the love of Christ by touching someone with kindness.

And best of all, serving becomes contagious when others see our joy in the process.

So will you *put your left foot in, and take your left foot out?*

Or will you *put your whole self in, and shake it all about?*

Jump in! The water's warm and there's always room for one more servant.

Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Romans 12:10-13

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Tessa Krippaehne

We were at one of our final rest stops – in the home stretch – after yet another amazing Mexico Mission Trip, when Tim received the call that his mom was sick. He needed to fly out immediately to go see her, but we were supposed to be leaving in two days to head out for *another* mission trip, this time to Yakima I remember Tim turning to me after getting off the phone with his family, and even though it would mean leading my own mission trip after having only been on staff at Grace a few months, **I just said “I got you.” That’s been a common phrase in my life. “I got you.”**

When you need a ride – I got you. When didn’t bring a phone charger – I got you. When you need to work through feelings – I got you. When you’re broke (*usually applying to my little sister*) – I got you. When you’re short a volunteer – I got you. When you need help moving, I’m reluctant but – I got you. I am always quick to jump in when needed

I’d had a hand in all the planning and organization of the trip so I wasn’t worried about details. I was, however, worried about my mental health. The mission trip to Mexico, however fulfilling, was also incredibly draining. On top of the lack of sleep, long hours in the bus, and watching over a gaggle of teens, I have the added burden of anxiety and panic disorder. It is something I have struggled with at times, but feel very fortunate to have (through many years of therapy) also found a way to manage and overcome. But being in a foreign country – far from home, away from my routines and comforts that typically keep my anxiety in check – is a trigger for that old friend ‘panic attack’ to show its face. I had made it successfully through the Mexico trip (with a few bouts of anxiety, but nothing I wasn’t well equipped to handle) but I was heading into my next trip in a weakened mental state. And off we went!

Two days into the Yakima Mission Trip, the pastor of the church in Yakima found me curled on the floor and crying, completely at the mercy of my mind. Through sobs I explained that it was just a panic attack and insisted I was fine. He ushered me into his home, sat me on the couch, and left me alone. After a few minutes, he returned with one of our youth. I had spent time with this particular youth talking about our common struggle with anxiety and helping them through some tough times on retreats. Nonetheless, I was mortified to have them see me in such a broken state. The pastor said to my youth “Tessa has helped you through tough times, now it’s your turn to serve her.”

March 13, continued

I had never thought of it as service, but there truly isn't a more fitting word to explain what this person did for me, as simple as it seems. They sat with me on that couch, talked to me, distracted me, calmed me, did all the things only someone with this shared struggle would know how to do. They were a true servant in my time of need.

When my sobbing subsided, I sent this servant back to join the other youth, and one of our advisors entered the room. He said, "Let's take a walk." I replied with, "No, I need to get the next session going, and I need to make sure dinner is started, and we need to get some more paint supplies for our project tomorrow." I'm not sure exactly what he responded with but it was something along the lines of "We've taken care of it" or "It's being handled." **It was his version of "I got you."**

Mission trips are always about serving, that's why they're so fulfilling. It feels good to be in service to others. **But on that trip, I felt and understood what it was like to be served. To have others take care of your needs when you are unable to. Being served is an important and humbling experience.** Not only does it fill you with gratitude and a desire to pay it forward, but by letting someone else serve you, you are giving them the opportunity to experience that fulfillment of serving. I was blessed to have a whole team of people who stepped in and stepped up when I needed help. The smallness of their gesture made a big difference. Not everyone has that incredible support behind them, but we can all be confident in knowing that when all else fails we can always look to God to say "Don't worry, I got you."

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.
1 Peter 5:6-7

I got you

Yesterday John and I were doing errands in his big black truck. I asked if he would stop at Bartell Drug on Hwy 99 as I needed one more thing for our trip. I ran in got it and had it rung up. There was an older gentleman in front of me and he walked very slow with his walker, so we were both going through the exit door at the same time.

Outside we were in the shade and it was cold and he had no coat. At first I thought he was looking for his car, even though I didn't think he was alert enough to drive (you never know). Then I asked him if someone was giving him a ride. His answer was slow and he was a confused. I finally concluded that a man dropped him off in a white car. He thought he was going to wait for him to drive him home. It might have been a Lyft driver, the way he talked.

I asked where he lived...he knew but the words didn't come easily and I suggested Wesley and he said yes, that's where he lived. I said **"Can we give you a ride?"** and he said "That would be nice". He was tall, not very strong and the seat in the truck is high. John and I helped him get in it. I was praying please don't break a bone.

He told us his name was Jack and he was originally from some other place – but had lived in Montana. He loved Montana. He'd only been living here a short time, he said. He directed us to the main building at Wesley and we helped him out of the truck with his little package from Bartell's. Just before we stopped I'd asked him what job did he have in Montana and he said he was a Pastor of a Methodist church! He offered us money for the ride and we said absolutely not, it was our pleasure to meet him.

I told him we go to Grace Lutheran Church here in Des Moines. Then told me he got married 6 weeks earlier. I said "May I ask, how old are you?" and he said he'll be 88 in May! We walked into Wesley and a nice woman in a wheelchair stopped and asked "How are you doing, Jack, and how is your wife?" He told her he went to the pharmacy to get something for his wife and his ride left but this nice lady and her husband brought him home. She told me I did my good job for the day.

Since I knew Jack was in the right place I said good bye. He offered us money a second time and I said absolutely not. Going back to the car, the lady in the wheel chair followed and said that was a good deed you and your husband did and I said **"We go to Grace Lutheran Church here in Des Moines and our purpose is to serve"**. She said with a smile. "I'm Lutheran too but not from around here." I asked if she'd like to come to our church and she said it's too hard to get ready to go, but thanked me.

Of course John and I drove away feeling better than ever, because we like to serve as do so many others at Grace.

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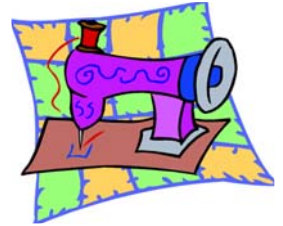
Janet Labes

I love to sew. Lifelong memories of watching and learning from my Mother who sewed many of the clothes for our family, probably have fed that love.

I began sewing and doing other needlework at an early age, learning from others, taking classes (Home Economics in Junior and Senior High School), studying instruction books, figuring out things on my own, and lots of practice.

I sewed many of my own clothes, clothes for my children, many household items, and craft items.

I gradually began sewing mission quilts for Lutheran World Relief at home as I had flexible time and materials available, and then I started participating in the Grace Quilting group.



Members of Grace Lutheran Church have been putting our faith in action by making and sending Lutheran World Relief mission quilts for 50 years now. I have been a part of these projects for nearly 45 years. This is a way to share something that I love, and a gift and talent God has given me.

Sharing time with other quilters and working together is also a time to develop friendships and a time for support for each other through life's stages. We are a blessing to each other.

The quilts we send are shared by LWR around the world, spreading God's love to others. As we give and share with others who may have lost everything through natural disasters, displacement, famine, chronic poverty, illness, civil unrest and wars, we think of the comfort and warmth of our quilts give, wrapping our global neighbors in God's love.

Thanks be to God for empowering us to serve together to make a difference.

Lord, may your love flow through the work of my hands to your children in need throughout the world. Amen.

“She opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy.” Proverbs 31:20

#howiserve

Lena Johnson

As a Medical Social worker and a former advocate for those who have been victims of domestic violence, I have spent my career working with people.

I have seen tragedies.

I have seen miracles.

I have seen goodness.

And I have seen the results of horrible human actions.

We, as humans, are amazingly fragile and resilient. We are good and we are bad, strong and weak, kind and mean. We are all of this at once and sometimes our minds are unable to process individuals who do “bad things”.

God calls us to see the good, teach those who need help, listen to those who are different from us and forgive those who wrong us.

As a medical professional I must treat every patient with dignity, respect, and provide them with the health care available to them. I have provided comfort to individuals who have made poor choices, hurt others, and committed crimes. I have made the “come now” call to relatives as a patient is dying due to a drunk driver.

I have set limits with patients.

I have had objects thrown at me.

I have had my arm grabbed, helped patients after they screamed obscenities at me, and guided them after they said racist, sexist or homophobic statements

I chose my current employer because their motto is “**Do what is right**” and I must stick with this- even when it is hard.

Why?

Because there is no “all good” person. I constantly fail. Humans are amazingly complicated. Jesus came to Earth and experienced the complication with us.

Personally experiencing crisis in my life I have wondered why? Why does this happen? Because it is God’s plan?

I cannot accept this. *Instead I imagine Jesus sits with us as we weep holding our hand and weeping with us, that God blows God’s spirit into us to keep our next breath coming, and that God gives us others to help us to put one foot in front of the other.*

March 16, continued

I have no delusions that I am perfect but I am confident that I am forgiven.

As Martin Luther said “Sin boldly! — but let your trust in Christ be stronger, and rejoice in Christ who is the victor over sin, death, and the world”.

So why do I do this work? Because I can. Because God’s grace fills me up. Jesus welcomed the “unclean”, the sinners, and even forgave Judas. I give to those complicated humans because I am complicated. Because my faith is complicated yet simple. Because God gives out forgiveness that seems complicated. Complicated because sin can be small or big and we cannot begin to comprehend the forgiveness of those who seem unforgivable. **I do this work because Jesus overturned the tables of injustice and I must do this as well. Because my failures can feed oppression, I must forgive myself and receive forgiveness.**

God calls me to write my own story, to be strong, and to wipe away tears of frustration. And God gives me anger and strength to speak when I see injustice.

But most of all God gives me forgiveness when I repeatedly fail my patients, my family and my friends. I do this because I have grace.



#howiserve

Janna Robbins

In describing my involvement in Grace over the years, I would probably use the terms **volunteer** or **member** never considering the word **servant** until reading the book The Servant and participating in the S.A.L.T. study. As a longtime member of Grace Choir, I wondered how singing might translate to serving?

The Grace Choir created a Mission Statement several year ago. The following excerpt reminds me that as a member, I am also a servant:

“The Grace Choir exists to serve Jesus Christ and Grace Lutheran Church through choral music....so the congregation will personally experience the Spirit of God through music, the language of the soul.”

Music is an important part of worship and praise to God! We are blessed here at Grace with an abundance of talent and dedication from our music worship leaders who truly exemplify a **servant's heart**. As a choir member and also as part of the Worship & Music Ministry Leadership Team, I am truly blessed to **serve** alongside all the people here at Grace who **serve** in worship ministry.

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.
Psalms 100: 1-2



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Mary Kay Metcalfe

Each fall a dedicated group of volunteers kicks off *Angel Tree* for Grace Lutheran Church. Angel Tree, a program of Prison Fellowship, reaches out to children of prisoners to receive a Christmas gift and a personal message from their incarcerated mom or dad. This Christmas, more than 290,000 children with incarcerated parents were blessed through the dedication of churches and Christian organizations across the US. When the church comes together to "remember the prisoner" and serve prisoners' children, an opportunity for healing and reconciliation occurs.

So much more than a gift, Angel Tree is encouragement. It's a reminder that a child is not forgotten. It's the hope of the gospel, delivered to one child at a time.

Personally, what keeps me excited about being a part of this ministry year after year is knowing that we are directly helping an incarcerated parent connect with his or her children at Christmas. **We can do for them what they cannot do for themselves. It's not about getting Christmas gifts -- the gift is just the conduit that supports a connection between parent and child.** It's a complicated job, but always rewarding and heart-warming.

Here are a few snippets of letters received from prisoners this year:

I appreciate what you have done for my children this year, I was very touched by your generosity. David P, Washington State Penitentiary

Thank you so much for the gift you gave to my son. What a blessing it was for all of us that he was able to receive a gift from his daddy. Mom and I know it came from the Lord via you, and we are both so very grateful of your ministry to us. Keith P, Washington State Penitentiary

I am grateful to have Grace Lutheran Church in my life and serving my family, especially during tough times. Phanna S, Stafford Creek Corrections Center

It means so much to know there are people that care for children of parents that have made some bad choices in life. I was worried about Christmas, but you helped my children to have good memories. I don't know you all, but you've impacted my life in a wonderful way. Elisa P, Washington Corrections Center for Women

My children have been blessed by you for quite a few years now, and I truly appreciate your kindness. They have received gifts that they love every year, and your blessings mean a great deal to me. Quinton C, Twin Rivers Corrections Center

Hospitality is what I grew up with as my parents would regularly host a wide variety of people and in numbers that still surprise me. I have come to understand that this is a way to serve, and **to extend hospitality to those around us is to open a door to God's love.**

For the past 6 years or so Jason and I have been hosting a first Saturday monthly breakfast for what is now the Adulthood with Grace group. We started with a pretty small group and it has now grown to be 30-40 adults and kids on a pretty regular basis. We make it a potluck and everyone brings something to share. We enjoy conversations around the table and over a cup of coffee. Extending our table, putting on the coffee and opening the doors is just a part of who we are.

Recently a group of the Adulthood with Grace women read the book ***Bread and Wine*** by **Shauna Niequist**. We gathered around tables to cook and talk about the book. Much of the book resounds with me but there are a few passages I'd like to share.

"My best moments have been spent in the kitchen, and many of the most deeply spiritual moments of the last year have taken place at the table. It's not, actually, strictly about food for me. It's about what happens when we come together, slow down, open our homes, look into one another's faces, listen to one another's stories." (p.13)

In the midst of life happenings, good and bad, easy and difficult, we say to each other 'Thanks for being my people'... "That's what this is about. This isn't about recipes. This is about a family, a tribe, a little band of people who walk through it all together, up close and in the mess, real time and unvarnished" (p.31))

I leave you with this passage, *"When you eat, I want you to think of God, of the holiness of hands that feed us, of the provision we are given every time we eat. When you eat bread and you drink wine, I want you to think about the body and the blood every time, not just when the bread and wine show up in church, but when they show up anywhere – on a picnic table or a hardwood floor or a beach." (p.17)*

We open doors, welcome each other in and as we look into each other's faces across a meal, we know we are sharing a deeply spiritual time. May we remember this every time.

There is always room at the table. Come and be fed.

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. 1 Peter 4:8-10

Have you ever...

- Bought a cup of coffee for the next person in line?
- Opened the door for someone carrying a bag of groceries?
- Served on a mission team in another location?
- Volunteered at your child's school?
- Smiled patiently and waited for someone to slowly cross the street?
- Been a part of a church work party?
- Volunteered @ a hospital or the airport?
- Sang in the church choir?
- Taught Sunday School?
- Donated food to the Food Bank?
- Wrapped gifts for the Food Bank @ Christmas?
- Tutored a child?
- Stayed overnight @ Graceland Shelter?
- Walked dogs @ a shelter?
- Helped with Media & Sound for a worship service?
- Been a helper @ VBS?
- Took extra shopping carts into the store on your way in?
- Helped with a grace in ACTION project?
- Picked up trash on your daily walk?
- Made soup for a sick friend?
- Helped clean up a space after an event?
- Shoveled a neighbor's driveway?
- _____
- _____
- _____

This is just the start of a list...if you have done any of these things,
you have been a SERVANT!

#howiserve

Tanya Goodrich

My mother first set an example of service by adopting me from an orphanage in Korea. **She continued to guide my life of service which was nurtured long ago through my mother's unconditional love for me and she encouraged me to pursue my dream to serve the Lord in missions.** She taught it through words and actions which continues to impact and guide me in how I serve today.

The greatest gift is to serve with “Unconditional love with expecting nothing in return.” I think that is how God can use me **the best.** I think my preference of service is to God is for the unseen tasks in life, be they big or small. Nothing that I do is hidden from our Lord who continues to lead and guide me in my mission of service.

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 4:10-11

Unconditional love expects nothing in return

#howiserve

John and Barb Osborn

The word “service” has many definitions among which are “contribution to the welfare of others” and “a helpful act”. So with that being stated, many people wonder what I can do in the Lord’s name to help someone else.

Service does not need to be monumental in nature. Simple things like preparing a meal, providing shelter, a kind word spoken, and just treating others with respect as a human being all qualify as service. Graceland Shelter is a perfect example of service. Each client has a story that matters, and it is noticed that someone will devote time to the client’s needs and troubles, expecting nothing in return except a thank you.

It is impossible to reach everyone but it is possible to reach one at a time. Remember, nothing done in the Lord’s service is ever useless.



So then, my dear friends stand firm and steady. Keep busy always in your work for the Lord, since you know that nothing you do in the Lord’s service is ever useless.

1 Corinthians 15:58

#howiserve

Diane Nelson

I find how I serve is directly related to "who" I serve. When I take that step of faith and do what I do to honor God and to give him the glory, things go vastly different than when I serve myself. As I look back onto the variety of ways I have served my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, I see where God has prepared my heart for this service ahead of time. Whether he identified a need or, provided the perfect timing for a new service opportunity, he worked in my heart, and whispered in my ear "you can do this." He had me ready to say "YES!"

The area I have served the longest is in Christian Education. I love teaching kids the depth of God's love, the truth about Jesus Christ and how he died for THEIR sin. I am a Children's Leader at Bible Study Fellowship, a Sunday School teacher and VBS helper here at Grace. When God calls, he equips!

My PASSION for teaching is wanting kids to connect the dots regarding Jesus' life, death and ministry at a young age. I didn't connect the dots until I was in my adult years. So, one of my favorite memories involves telling the Bible story to a group of 3 and 4 year olds when we were studying the book of John at BSF. I used a gift box to illustrate God's free gift to us in Jesus. In telling this story, I talked about this free gift from God, but sadly some people did not want this gift. There was one boy that spoke up saying, "I want the gift." His mom shared with me later that day he asked how Jesus could live in his heart and she prayed with him. Dots were connected!

One thing I have learned is "young children respond to love." In one class, a girl often ran from her mom, while in class she often ran out the door and down the hall from me, thinking it was fun to be chased. If she did not behave in class, I learned her mom gave her "icky juice" (*cod liver oil on the tongue*). I didn't want this girl to get "icky juice" as a result of being in my class, so I didn't report her behavior. But, I learned through studying The 5 Love Languages, this girl might have the love language of physical touch and possibly service. This proved true as the year progressed. I greeted her with a huge hug each day, I placed her in my lap for story or hymn time and she would completely calm down. I also would find odd jobs she could help me with during class. On the final day of class, we had said our good-byes and she was playing in the gym. But then ran back up the stairs (away from mom) to give me one last huge hug and tell me she loved me. Her mom, out of breath, stood in the doorway in tears.

I always yearn for a deeper connection with God and when Joe Wilder started a group called Prayer Warriors, I knew I was in. Prayer is the glue that holds my life in balance. Sometime I wrestle with God, other times I feel his guidance and direction. I sense his urging, his presence, his comfort, his peace and patience through prayer. I truly love this group! We pray together lifting up the needs of one another, our church, our extended families, as well as our nation. How much I love this group was tested when Joe left the church two years ago. Again, God worked in my heart and told me to be the one to lead. Our new name is **Grace Prayer Support (GPS)** and God has shown me again and again how he guides us in seeking his will through prayer and support of each other.

God's perfect timing was shown to me when I closed my beading business. I would now have time on my hands. People questioned me, "What are you going to do next?" Four days following my final bazaar, Pastor John asked if I would consider being Treasurer. With no red flags waving, I prayed over it and told John "Yes!" God has stretched and grown me in this role. I am thankful for his grace, as this has been a bit of a bumpy ride. The Finance Ministry Team has been a huge support for me in learning my responsibilities. There has been a lot of turnover in this area over the past year with Dick, Teresa and Kristi all leaving. Grace upon grace has been extended as Angie, Heather and I all settle into our new positions. Thank you!

Being a member of the Congregational Board is also a blessing. The Board is a diverse group of members, all passionate about this congregation thriving. I truly see the church come alive through serving in this way. I have been called onto other teams to work in other areas of the church community I previously would not have considered. One example is Grace Children's Center. I learned Royale was in need of office help. I heard that whisper in my ear again, "You can do this", so I asked Royale if I could help volunteer over there -- not only have I dusted off my office skills, I have gained a wonderful beautiful friend. The church is alive over at Grace Children's Center, too. I see many Grace members volunteer to help with construction/maintenance projects and provide items for classrooms. You are so appreciated!

We are the church. We are grace in ACTION!

#howiserve

Tessa Krippaehne

I was first asked to join the staff at Grace in the fall 10 years ago and served on staff for almost 6 years. I quickly fell in love with Youth Ministry -- it was a true talent I never knew I had. I took to it like fish to water – or whatever that saying is. Youth Ministry fulfilled my life in ways I never would have imagined. I gave those kids and that program everything I had: mentally, physically, and spiritually. And even when my time on staff at Grace ended, I was still so grateful that God had pointed me down this path for the time he did. **Little did I know God wasn't done with me yet.**

Summer 2017 I got the Call, I literally can't remember how it happened. Did I hear someone in passing saying something about who was going to teach confirmation? Had someone asked me if I knew who was taking over Pastor Stan's confirmation class? Or did it come to me in a dream? However it happened, I suddenly found myself drafting this e-mail to Pastor John:

Hi John!

Hope you had a great month off! Just wanted to shoot you a quick message to let you know that I would be available and happy to teach confirmation this year if you find yourself short-handed!

Tessa

I might have been out of my mind. But there I was back in Youth Ministry, volunteering to teach a group of 7th Graders about God. To say that it filled a hole in my life would be an understatement, I was overflowing. It wasn't necessarily about Youth Ministry or the joy I got from the kids (*although being in community with youth – the future of our church, the future of our world is the most rewarding experience you could imagine*) My fulfillment came from utilizing my gift – a God-given gift – my ability to relate to and be in relationship with youth.

Even when I didn't think it was possible, God made space for ministry AND work in my life, and he continues to provide me with the strength to give 100% to both (*without getting tired!*)

I think God wants us to find places to use *all* the gifts he's given us. The work I do with my company allows me to explore and develop my creative gifts that I never tapped into while working in Youth Ministry, and now I'm able to volunteer my gifts in Youth Ministry again as well. And who knows, there may be other untapped gifts I have yet to discover, so I'll keep my heart and my eyes open to whatever God puts in my path next – he's not done with me yet.

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. 1 Peter 4:10

#howiserve

Katie Paulson

How She Serves: Kirstin Hervin

Through countless hours of research, hard work, creativity, spiritual connection and great enthusiasm for learning about our faith, Kirstin Hervin is bringing people to The Table* so that we (Adulting with Grace) may share, grow, learn, experience and love together as a community. Her creativity** and ability to engage each individual is sparking deep and meaningful conversations that many of us have longed for, but never had the opportunity to initiate in a safe and accepting space.

In addition to all of the work she has put into helping AWG members grow in their faith, Kirstin has also organized life oriented educational classes such as “Marriage Chat” lead by Pastor Chad and “Financial Foundations” lead by AWG members who are specialists within the financial and legal fields. These expert lead sessions are providing incredibly valuable information in a tangible and meaningful way for the AWG members.

Adulting with Grace is so fortunate and grateful to have such an incredible servant leader. Thank you, Kirstin.

**The Table is the Adulting with Grace Sunday school hour.*

***Ask her about the incredible booklets she compiled: <Back Story> and “Kingdom Come.”*



#howiserve

Kay Ronde

SALT arrived at Grace this last fall!

Serving and Leading Together.

I attended and participated in the group discussions for the book, The Servant by James C. Hunter. On the last day of the study, I asked myself, "How can I serve?"

Over the last 5 years, I have been teaching and subbing in our preschool. This year the enrollment was such that I could not receive pay from Grace Lutheran School.

But.... I could SERVE!

I volunteer Mondays and Wednesdays. **Some days I am an Old 80. Other days I am a Young 80.**

I need to always be a Young 80 on Mondays and Wednesdays because the two teachers and 18 preschoolers are counting on it!

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.
Joshua 24:15

Take your gift.
Find the place.
Serve!

In Mark 12:28-31, we read that one of the scribes came near and heard the disciples disputing with one another, so he asked Jesus, “Which commandment is the first of all?”

Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Sacrifice, surrender, and suffering are not popular topics nowadays. Our culture makes us believe that we can have it all, that we should demand our rights, that with the right technology all the pain and all the problems can be overcome. **That is not it.** It is impossible to relieve the world’s suffering unless people are willing to surrender themselves, to make sacrifices, and to suffer along with the poor.

We are made to give. We are made for love. The words of Jesus, “Love one another as I have loved you,” must be not only a light for us but a flame that consumes the self in us. **Love, in order to survive, must be nourished by sacrifices, especially the sacrifice of self.**

Spend a few moments today considering sacrifice, surrender, and suffering. As the hands of Jesus in the world, what role do they play in our life together as the Jesus community?

Lord Jesus, open our Spirits to your leadership in our lives. Help us to fully live as you intend for us to live and guide us in the ways of peace and hope for our neighbors in this world. Amen.

#howiserve

Nina Epling

I would love to tell you about a wonderful service project called **Shop With A Cop** (SWAC) that I've been involved with for years.

Every December, the King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) out of the Maple Valley Precinct, matches officers from multiple jurisdictions, with needy kids in the area. Each child is given a set amount of money and they shop the local Wal-Mart with their officer. Last year over 130 law enforcement and KCSO Admin folks came together on a Saturday for a 7am roll call. Over 500 kids and their parents lined up to go through registration where their names were preapproved for this program. The Soup Ladies provided breakfast and warm drinks for everyone. Santa arrived on the BearCat SWAT vehicle, and stayed for pictures.

Along with the local law enforcement partners, numerous volunteers from the Greater King County Police Activities League (PAL), Mary's Place, Rotary and local community members join to make this a positive and memorable experience for hundreds of kids.

I love SWAC because it shows **the true heart of the law enforcement community who work every day in difficult jobs to keep our neighborhoods safer**. They spend a Saturday in December on their own time, to have a positive interaction with kids that will last a lifetime. But most of all, I love seeing the kids and their families have a fun day shopping, interacting and joking around with their matched officer.

God works in amazing ways. His spirit of love moves through every person involved in SWAC and goes far beyond this one day. Lives are changed both through giving and receiving. I believe that's the miracle of service.

***Contribute to the needs of the saints;
extend hospitality to strangers.***

Romans 12:13

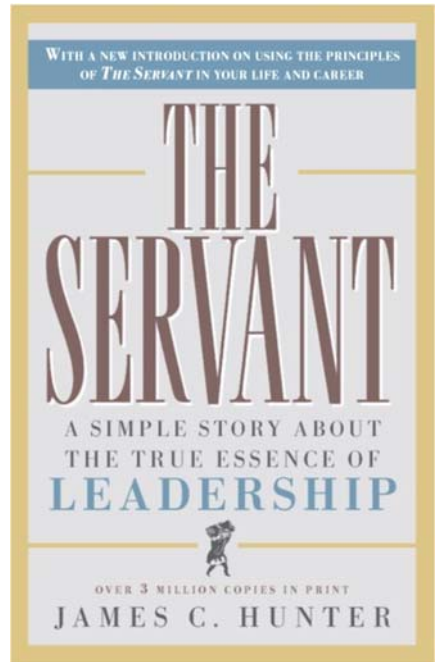
#howiserve

Jan Slezak

From my perspective, the book The Servant has had the greatest impact on my leadership skills. Residing in a retirement setting like Wesley, opportunity arose for leadership in several different ways. Becoming part of the Resident Council, ultimately the chair position, allowed me to use the guidelines as to how I could have a “servants heart” in handling meetings and issues that arose. Putting residents at the top, not administration, is a continued work in progress. Focusing on love and living humbly was a major undertaking. Meetings are now being designed around respect, understanding and kindness.

This is an ongoing goal. Feeling the support through prayer and knowing that Christ is with me has made an impact on my life. I currently am involved in helping to make-changes in the council structure.

Hunter’s writing style and intuitive words are leading me forward in helping to create so that we indeed have within us, the “servants heart” that Christ so modeled!



***Those who speak on their own seek their own glory;
but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent
him is true, and there is nothing false in him.***

John 7:18

#howiserve

Nita Sitterley

I find great pleasure serving with the Guate Girls on our mission trip to Guatemala, working with the staff and the women in the shelter El Refugio.

You may wonder why.

First of all, while in Guatemala we engage in a world that is so different from our normal daily lives.

Guatemala is a very poor country, stricken with poverty. We see this everywhere we look, and we are immediately reminded of all the blessings we take for GRANTED back in the United States. We have beautiful homes, cars, jobs to help feed our families. We have closets full of clothing, food on the table, shelter, doctors, churches, and legal support. We also have an EDUCATION like none other for our children, along with the freedom to pursue our dreams. OUR BLESSINGS are endless here!

Unlike the Guatemalan women who live with abuse, rape, molestation of their children, violence. Who work hard, wondering how to feed their families and find a safe place to live. Who live in survival mode minute by minute, day by day, week by week, MONTH BY MONTH. Sometimes there is ...so much sadness.... It is hard to wrap your head around what they have to endure, and it breaks your heart!

Our mission trip to Guatemala? What do we do? We go, support, help, LOVE, care, and share the gospel with the beautiful ladies and their families in the shelter. Woman to woman, we are there mostly as mother figures. Their culture is in a very harsh environment, with little or no respect for women in general. Unfortunately, this attitude is handed down from generation to generation.

The Guate Girls truly give plenty of love and hugs, along with our own special gifts of support for the women at El Refugio. We can even be a little silly at times, clowning around to make them smile and to help them forget their problems for just a little while...

I think Spa Night at the shelter, with a manicure, new PJ's, dinner, and homemade treats is their favorite time! We enjoy being women of God, who are willing to help, willing to hug, willing to share – all so they can hold their heads high and know they are loved. We share the gift of self-worth.

March 30, continued

We also love to help the women with perhaps new skills such as sewing, jewelry making, crafting, new baking ideas, studying God's word and just being together.

While women are at El Refugio, they will also make new friends and help support each other, which is a good thing. They all have a story to tell. No doubt, El Refugio is a very special place. It is a safe place to heal and grow!

My special gift of serving is photography. I meet with the girls/ladies for a one-on-one photo session capturing their unique spirit! I also enjoy taking pictures of all our activities there as well. I love having the one-on-one time with the women and their families even though I can't speak a bit of Spanish. We communicate just fine with a smile, a hug, and a photo or two of themselves to ease their troubled minds.

At the end of our stay, I leave each family a small book with photos of themselves, their children, and a few of the Guate Girls too. With so many other priorities far more important than photos, I thank God that I am able to share my gifts in a place like this. It makes my heart happy to watch each woman look at themselves in the photos, honestly SMILE, and see themselves as we do...as a BEAUTIFUL PERSON!

There are plenty of other joys we receive from the ladies as well. The women and their families show so much love and appreciation for the gifts of ourselves that we offer. It can be life changing for them and their families to know that someone else cares about them with no strings attached. In our hearts and minds, we continue to pray for each of them, and we continue to serve with support through funds for education, transition, and family needs.

I wish everyone could or would go on a mission trip of some kind. I can promise you...you will receive more than you could ever give!

**HOW DO YOU SERVE? WHAT GIFTS CAN YOU SHARE?
We are so blessed here in America...**

**Remember this: SOMEONE SOMEWHERE SOMETIME
NEEDS YOUR GIFTS!**

Find a place where you can serve – you won't regret it.

#howiserve

Harriet Thomsen

I serve God by praying for and with my family and trying to live my life in such a way that they will see and get to know Jesus. I let all of my grandchildren know that I pray for them daily. I often get “special requests” when they are in extra need of support. Even when I tell them they can go “direct”! I hope they will do so when I am gone.

I serve my neighbors and friends by trying to be a good listener, responding to needs and helping. I often take chicken soup when someone has a cold or cookies when they are depressed. I was born and raised in a Jewish home, and they call my soup Jewish penicillin. I may not be able to cure them right away, but hope that the gifts of nourishment will encourage them. When I tell people I am praying for them and invite them to special services at Grace, I hope that Jesus will fill them with his nourishment of peace and love, as he so often nourishes me.

I serve my church by helping with Graceland Shelter, community dinners, GPS (Grace Prayer Support), hospitality and baking cookies when needed for memorials or other special events.

I serve my community as an active member in **Friend to Friend America** for the past 44 years. I have many stories about the people I befriended through this program since it was started in 1974. I have seen nursing homes and facilities change tremendously throughout the years and know that people visiting others one-on-one has brought eyes and ears to the community of caregivers, and the families of the people we visit. It is interesting that the many residents who never had a friendly visitor suddenly respond to the love shared with improved health and attitude. I also serve Children’s Hospital by volunteering once a week at the Children’s Hospital Bargain Boutique in Kent, in addition to serving with the Des Moines Guild for Children’s Hospital, which has raised over 2 million dollars for uncompensated care in the past 80 years. All of these opportunities help me feel that I am doing something to improve the community, but also connect me with people of all races, religions, and needs. I have truly met wonderful people as I serve and feel I am the one who benefits most of all.

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus... Philippians 2:3-5

#howiserve

Stephanie Nichols

For the past few years I have served as an advisor for the Grace youth program, and for the past year I represented the youth program on the Ministry Leadership Team. I enjoy working with our youth, with Miranda our Youth Director, and with the other youth advisors. I love going to camp and on retreats, teaching junior high Sunday School, and helping out with youth events.

The best part of my job is getting to know individual youth personally, and watching them grow and develop into youth leaders. More than once I have seen the shyest and most socially awkward youth turn out to be the most effective group leader.

The hardest part of my job is learning about the hardships many of our youth face today. As I get to know these youth, I hear about the intense pressure they often face at home and at school. Some of our youth have lost close family members, some live with seriously ill family members, and others face bullying at school.

I am very grateful that Grace continues to support this wonderful program and that I have had the opportunity to share in it. It has been a great blessing for me.

... she must be well attested for her good works, as one who has brought up children, shown hospitality, washed the saints' feet, helped the afflicted, and devoted herself to doing good in every way.

1 Timothy 5:10

#howiserve

Lindsay O'Neal Lombardo

When I walked into the large conference room that morning, I was definitely nervous. It was my first day in my new job in a new school district. The tables were covered with confetti and bright yellow school bus decorations. We had been instructed to read Jon Gordon's *The Energy Bus* prior to this daylong staff retreat. And I was wondering if I had maybe made a huge mistake. People were smiling, having fun, passing out snacks, and getting ready to participate in a day of "icebreaker" activities and vision-setting. I am *not* a fan of icebreaker activities, and I had always experienced back-to-school retreats with a slightly more serious atmosphere. After all, the work of education is hard and really important work!

I have been blessed by a career in education for the last thirteen years. I have worked in three different school districts across two different states and have held five different job titles in that time, working under bosses with a range of leadership styles--trusting, micro-managing, free-thinking, top-down, and authoritarian. The job I was coming from most recently was incredibly rewarding, but it came at a high price. Very long hours, incredibly high expectations with low support, an environment that often provoked fear and anxiety, and a belief that the answer was always "yes." It fell under a more top-down, authoritarian leadership style, and as I contemplated my own growing leadership, I realized that it was not the style I wanted to "grow up" under. I felt that there had to be something different out there.

So as I sat at a table with total strangers, staring at the confetti and decorations, I briefly wondered if I had made the wrong move accepting a position in a new district. **But as one of the district leaders began to give a presentation on Servant Leadership and the importance of building relationships, I knew without a doubt I was in the right place.** After all, I knew the ultimate Servant Leader in Jesus. And while his name was never mentioned in this public school workplace, I heard his words being spoken in that presentation, I saw his face in the servant leaders around me, and I felt called by him to just take it all in. That this was the real thing--authoritarian leadership is *not* the only way to get hard work accomplished.

By the time the day was over, we had made a mess of the room with activities, sharing snacks, presentations, and a few games. An assistant superintendent wrapped up our last activity and the whole group

applauded in appreciation for all those who made the day possible. As everyone stood up to get ready to leave, I watched something I did not think I would ever see. **The very first person to grab a garbage can and begin cleaning up the leftover snacks and decorations was the district superintendent.** The head boss. Of the seven school district superintendents I worked under during my career, I had never seen one clean up after a staff retreat or meeting. Most of them never even stuck around long enough to thank those who were cleaning up.

This...*this* was the style of leadership I wanted to grow up under. Where titles do not matter but influence does. Where people matter more than projects, and we build relationships while accomplishing the work. Where everyone, and I mean *everyone*, is willing to pick up a garbage can when needed.

Servant Leadership is not easy. It takes energy and effort, especially when things are not going well and times are challenging. But we have the best role model of what it looks like to serve others--Jesus Christ. I often wonder if, as the wedding party at Cana in Galilee began to wrap up (John 2: 1-11), Jesus and his disciples grabbed the garbage cans of the day and led the clean-up efforts. I like to think that is exactly what they did.

In what ways can you pick up the garbage can this week?



#howiserve

Pastor John

The people who keep track of these things tell us that we had more snow in February this year than we have had in 30 years!

One morning after a dump of 12 inches of the beautiful white stuff, the city of Federal Way actually plowed our street. That was nice. The only problem was that now my car was blocked in by the pile of snow left by the plow at the edge of the blade. This brought back memories of Minnesota and many mornings of digging my car out after the snow plow had gone by. This usually happened right after I had just shoveled the drive earlier.

So that February morning, after the big snow, I located my snow shovel (no easy task since I haven't used it in several years, and headed up the drive to begin the process of freeing my car from the results of our efficient city workers and their excellent plowing skills.

After I finished digging my car out, I noticed that my neighbor's car was just as snowed in as mine. I also knew that my neighbor had just recently had his leg amputated as a result of an injury sustained while on active duty in Iraq. **It was a no-brainer. What would it take me, another 10 or 15 minutes to dig his car out for him?** That just seemed like the right thing to do.

You know, a simple act of kindness is a great way to serve. It usually doesn't take a lot of time or effort. It doesn't need to be complicated, or require special skills. All you need is a servant heart and a reminder that we are to treat others as we would like to be treated.

When they discovered that I had shoveled their car out, my neighbor sent me a very nice text thanking me for my kindness. That was nice. It felt good that they realized I had done that.

The best reward, however, was simply knowing I had done something nice for someone else. That was thanks enough.

I believe that God created us to be kind to one another and when we live as we are created to live, life is good. That's why it always feels good to serve.

#howiserve

Jenna Carodiskey-Wiebe

I had been knitting and crocheting for several years, but had not thought about crafting for charity until a member of our congregation posted on Facebook that she was collecting socks and mittens for her second grade students- some of whom had neither.

It was Lent, and at the next service, I brought the start of a mitten. I made several pairs that year, and soon looked for other opportunities to keep my hands busy during the service while serving God's people. Over the years I have made hats for a girl's school in Tanzania, scarves for the men served by our homeless ministry, sweaters for a Syrian refugee camp in Turkey, premie hats, and blankets for Project Welcome Blanket.

I believe that when God gives us a gift, God wants us to use that gift in the service of others. Sometimes we can use that gift right where we are- sitting at home, at church, or in a coffee shop.

Then they too will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or without clothes, or sick, or in prison, and not help you?' Matthew 25:44



#howiserve

Debbie Trafton O'Neal

This past summer I had the honor and privilege of serving as the foreman of a jury for a very complicated trial. You may recall in 2016 there were 2 murders and 3 assaults in a homeless encampment in Seattle known as The Jungle. These crimes actually took place in a sub-area of The Jungle known as The Caves – an even deeper, darker place sheltering the homeless under Interstate 5.

If you've ever served on a jury, you know that you serve usually a day or two, maybe a week – or perhaps you are never even called into the jury box. But when I first entered the courtroom, and saw a 3-month calendar on the wall, I knew this trial would be different.

I was immersed in the complexity and serious nature of these crimes for almost 3 months this past summer. My fellow jurors and I spent long hours together, not able to talk about the case, and so we bonded over different things – work life, travel visits, things we like to cook, books we've read, and for a few of us, our faith.

With a steady parade of witnesses, experts and attorneys, the days were full of information and another world – a world I was not a daily part of. I learned more about the lifestyle of drug dealers and users, of prison terms and street slang, and about the cruel realities of life as a homeless person, than I ever thought I would. **There were often nights when I would lay awake, picturing the evidence we had seen that day, and trying to keep an open mind for all of the information still to be presented.**

When closing arguments came, we the jury went back to our space, let out huge sighs, and began the difficult work of coming to a verdict. Finally, we could talk about the case, share our frustrations with evidence and lack of evidence, and get to work.

We took our role very seriously. There were missing pieces and we did our best to put those together. We served as jurors who were fair and honest and wanted to come to the right decision. Lives were taken away, and other lives were at stake. **We served as we would have wanted someone to serve if we had been on trial.**

On the last day of deliberation, we went our separate ways for lunch, determined to come back and make our final decision. I couldn't eat that day, and spent my lunch hour in prayer, asking God for guidance in making the right decision. When we all returned after lunch, I called for the vote.

Ultimately, we had a hung jury with the voting 8-4. It was hard for most of us, as we felt we had not completed our job. But we had served to the best of our ability.

Being a servant leader on this jury was life-changing for me. It wasn't always a comfortable place to be. But I am grateful I was able to serve.

#howiserve

Sarah Wix

Servant leadership? I was trying to think of some profound thing I've done as far as servant leadership. Guess what I get to talk about guys? Vacation Bible School! (Get ready for the exclamation points!!!!)

Anyone that knows me knows that you simply say the words "Vacation Bible School" and Sarah Wix cries. **What better opportunity would you have to share the love of Jesus with children than an entire week of VBS?** This week is powerful, let me tell you. I encourage you to volunteer time or just come in and experience an opening or closing ceremony at VBS. You will find me hiding somewhere in the back watching, taking it all in, and crying. I call myself a professional crier. But you guys, it's awesome!!!

The music is powerful, and my kids insist we keep the VBS CD's of every summer in our car so we can reflect from time to time. It all starts with our leadership, behind the scenes and in front of these kids -- they make it all happen. All the teachers and volunteers and office staff and paperwork champions. All the planned lessons (seasons in advance). All the prayer! We have youth who turn into adults while leading a group of kids through the VBS day. There are no phones involved, just time spent singing and playing and praising Jesus. What my kids get out of a week of VBS is better than a whole summer of activities and it's right here in our backyard.

I encourage you to experience the magic, it's better than Disneyland!

VBS is a big job, and we are lucky to have Kathy and Kristin, Diane and Anita. I am so very thankful that I jumped on the VBS bandwagon years before we joined the church. We didn't even go to Grace but we knew Kathy.

Back to my own leadership. **I spend my servant leadership time quietly planning lessons** (February through June) and **then working with my mother to prep supplies. I pray about those lessons.** I think "Is this too hard for a preschooler?" We make and remake every craft and then hand write a Bible verse on it. I cry knowing what my kids get to experience and how lucky they are....and it's not even June yet! Their teachers are doing this for them too!!!

What I wanted for my kids and my family when shopping for a church I found at Grace. A wonderful children's program where the teachers love my kids, enriching opportunities to make friends and volunteer at the same time, someone to call when I'm feeling down. **My only regret? Why didn't I do this sooner? Why didn't I put myself out there and volunteer? Grace has many opportunities to serve and volunteer – just put yourself out there.** Especially with our children's programs. The hugs are a bonus too! Please try our VBS program this upcoming year, "ROAR, Life is wild and God is good" I guarantee you won't regret it!

#howiserve

Lindsay O'Neal Lombardo

In late 2014, I attended a conference in downtown Portland with a colleague of mine. On our first morning there, we made the rainy walk to the nearest Starbucks location. I knew we had a long day of sessions ahead of us and was contemplating an extra shot of espresso in my venti peppermint mocha. As we approached the entrance of the coffee shop, I noticed a disheveled man standing uncomfortably close to the doors, eyes down-cast, scruffy backpack at his feet, with a dirty handwritten sign: *Homeless, anything helps*. My colleague and I nervously scurried past, avoiding him as best we could.

Portland is a city known for its homeless population, as is our own area of King County. **And while it is one thing to know the statistics and understand the complex issues surrounding this conversation, it is quite another when we have the opportunity to look into the face of the one holding the cardboard sign.**

Fresh cup of coffee in hand, my colleague and I again slipped past the man outside of the Starbucks, through the pouring rain, and back into the comfort of the swanky hotel where the conference was being held. **But I could not get the man out of my mind. It started to eat away at me throughout the day. More than anything, I was just ashamed at my refusal to acknowledge his existence.** At dinner, I asked my colleague if she had noticed him, and she sighed heavily as she admitted her own shame at her insistence on ignoring him.

The next morning, we again made the trek to the Starbucks and saw the same man holding his sign once again. This time, we approached him, looked him in the eyes, greeted him, and asked if we could buy him a cup of coffee. He smiled and thanked us. Inside the coffee shop, we bought him a coffee, breakfast sandwich, bottle of water, and a few lunch items. He was polite and thankful as he wrapped his hands around the hot coffee and tucked the other items into his backpack for later. We smiled, and he waved as we walked away. **I would guess he was grateful for the food we gave him, but I think it probably mattered even more that someone stopped and looked him in the eye with a smile.**

I have heard people say that one should not give money to those standing on street corners. After all, they are "probably just going to spend it on drugs or alcohol." Others have told me how offended they were when they offered someone food and the response of that individual was that they would "rather have the money." Of course, it is always important to use our best judgment, **but I believe "God does not call us to judge; he simply calls us to give."**

Ultimately, that moment in Portland inspired a song entitled "Let Me See" which became an anthem for Lutheran World Relief.

It is not about handing over cash or buying a stranger a cup of coffee.

Sometimes, it is simply about stopping to smile at someone rather than walking on by.

Let Me See

Words and Music by Lindsay M. O'Neal

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It's so easy to walk on by
It's so easy to ignore the cry
And never lift a hand to help a stranger up.
But give me the heart for more than this.
Let me see what others miss.

Those who are hungry,
Those who are hurting,
Those who are broken and torn apart,
Those who are thirsty,
Those who are lonely,
Those who seek to know Your heart.
Let me see.

Life is crazy and life is tough.
The road is broken, and the way is rough.
How could what I do ever be enough?
Give me the heart for more than this
Let me see what You don't miss.

Those who are hungry,
Those who are hurting,
Those who are broken and torn apart,
Those who are thirsty,
Those who are lonely,
Those who seek to know Your heart.

And Lord, make me brave,
Make me strong enough to stand.
Give me Your eyes and Your heart,
Let me be Your hands

To those who are hungry,
Those who are hurting,
Those who are broken and torn apart,
Those who are thirsty,
Those who are lonely,
Those who seek to know Your heart.
Let me see.

God's blessing to all who are picking up this booklet and reading it today in this season of Lent 2019! My hope is that you might be able to see yourself somewhere in this devotional booklet, perhaps even in my words.

I'll begin with my Bible verse thoughts:

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs." Matthew 19:14

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

When I turned 55 years old, in the gentlest of way, my heavenly father made it known to me that it was time to redefine my service to my north-east Tacoma neighborhood of Dash Point, my Pierce County, my United States and even to the ends of the earth. It seemed to me that bringing my "A" game of teaching each day to vibrant, high-energy, enthusiastic high school students in the Federal Way School District was going to end after 34 years. THAT chapter of my life was ebbing because of some health issues, and for months I prayed and looked for SIGNS of how I could continue to be a servant? I had way too much energy and maybe perhaps some wisdom to share – I wasn't ready to just walk away and retire.

I knew I was trainable, so what was out there for me? After studying the Book of John at Bible Study Fellowship, I opened my mind and heart to "signage" which is a big deal to the author of John. That year, the year I turned 56 and over a two-month period I read two excellent editorials (hmmmm – were they signs?) in the Tacoma News Tribune about the "Baby Boomer Generation" extending their gifts and talents of time, mindfulness and work-experience tools and sharing them with "the children."

One article was a much needed call (and still is!) to read to children in area schools.

The other article was the path I took and I never looked back. It was the call to become a **GAL/CASA, a volunteer "court appointed special advocate"** or neglected and abused children in Pierce County. In my own neighborhood.

April 8, continued

Our laws carefully and explicitly define “neglect and abuse” toward children, and I am proud to say we have over 233 volunteers and professionals like myself “of all ages” in Pierce County who serve and advocate for over 1,300 “identified” children from birth to eighteen. Each and every one of these children, is required by “our laws” to have a Guardian Ad Litem/C.A.S.A. on their case. I was well trained for this service, assigned a supervisor and soon found my next calling advocating in court for a young boy and his sister. I find myself working closely amongst DSHS Social Workers to Assistant Attorney Generals and lawyers representing parents, police and first responders; from foster parents to judges who honestly listen to every word in my written as well as verbal testimony. Once I began visiting these children in schools and foster care, I was hooked!

I will tell you I understand this is not volunteer work for everyone. People may say to me “*I could never do that*” or ask me, “*Why in the world would you want that kind of volunteer work at this point in your life?*” I honestly hear what they are trying to express because I know this is not volunteer work for everyone. But for me, I recall and sing the words of Isaiah 6:8 and the invigorating hymn “Whom shall I send?”

Who will serve these deserving children? If not me, then whom?

To learn more about this excellent well-thought out volunteer program, I urge you to go to your county’s website for details of this excellent opportunity for both men and women of all ages. Search out the programs that interest you and. take time to read and ponder how you might serve. You will be blessed in innumerable ways for just considering the possibilities.

Or please contact me at sherryzimcasa@gmail.com or dashpointsherry@ymail.com

#howiserve

Gail and Sandy Sandoval

Since retirement from teaching in 2000, I have participated in the equivalent of **one volunteer project per year**. Until 2009, I had been a member on teams to Mexico, Tanzania, Costa Rica, India and Brazil. I worked with local people in a school, an orphanage, a women's co-op, a community center, and with children undergoing cancer treatment.

Since 2009, Sandy and I have helped build homes on 12 trips through Habitat for Humanity. These include 5 states and 5 different countries: Trinidad, Malawi, Nicaragua, Portugal, and Romania. We also were members of teams to Cuba and the Cook Islands helping to teach English and participate in other community projects.

Locally we enjoy working with Graceland Shelter, community dinners, the Des Moines Food Bank, and the Grace Quilters.

"Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these, my brethren, you did it to me." Matthew 25:40



Teacher Laurie shared with me recently how she always prays with the children as she prepares to take them to school each day. The children have now started asking her to teach them to pray, and when she was out one day, the children made sure that they prayed for their day. Two children in this class, whose mother has told us very clearly that she is not a believer, recently came and told teacher Laurie excitedly that their mom had “signed them up for church!”

Another parent came and shared with me that on the way in to school that morning, her son asked if she remembered the movie “Boss Baby” and specifically in the movie, when the older brother asked the baby where he came from. The baby replied something about just arriving. The little boy asked his mom if that is how baby Jesus came too. Once again, this is a mother that has expressed little interest for herself in learning about Jesus, but was very thankful her son was asking questions and trying to figure things out.

And another parent has shared how their son who just turned 3 now always asks to pray at bedtime and prays for the children in his class, his teachers and his family.

Over the last two weeks, I have been the recipient of **Grace Lutheran Church’s commitment to service and joy**. Several members of a small group and I shared Saturday morning together while installing bulletin boards in our classrooms. **We also prayed together for the ministry of Grace Children’s Center, the teachers, the families and the children.** It was a beautiful morning spent together.

The month of January started off rough for us – several teachers struggled with illness, one had to have her tonsils out, and a child had his tonsils removed. Two staff members spent hours in prayer and anticipation for their loved one’s recovery in the hospital. Unfortunately, one staff member has had to say good-bye to her husband.

In the midst of this month, one family bought pizza for the staff to share for lunch, simply to say thank you and encourage us after the rough start to 2019. This is just one example of why serving in this ministry is so rewarding.



Washing a Foot or Two

I have made several mission trips during my time as a pastor of Grace. My most recent trip to Uganda, however, is probably the most powerful trip I have made. Each trip has been special in its own way and has changed me in ways I don't even fully understand, but my Uganda experience was exceptionally powerful.

Our Lenten devotional this year is focused on our SALT emphasis – **Serve And Lead Together.**

While there in Uganda, I had the opportunity to teach a class on leadership for some of the local leaders in the church and community. I chose to share some of what we were doing here at Grace about servant leadership. They listened intently, took notes, and asked some very thoughtful questions.

Following the class, several of us had the privilege of washing the feet of those in attendance. Whoever wanted to come forward was invited to do so. And they came. Young and old, men and women, boys and girls. They came to have their feet washed by their teacher and their teacher was moved and humbled by the experience. What an incredible honor!

In John, Chapter 13, we read about Jesus washing the feet of his disciples. It is one of the clearest, most powerful and most pointed teachings of Jesus in the entire New Testament. As disciples of Jesus we are to be in the business of washing feet. In John 13:15 Jesus says, “For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.” Then in verse 17, Jesus says, “If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.”

Can it be any clearer than that?

The idea of serving is one thing, however, if you join the concept of serving with leadership, that becomes a little more interesting. **Once again, Jesus teaches us in Mark 10:45, “For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”**

If the greatest leader of all time, was a servant, then it is clear that as leaders today, we are also to be servants.

#howiserve

Nicole Vinson Flores

Serving... healing... hoping...

With our son's first birthday in heaven this year, we wondered how we could make him proud... how we could engrave his life in our memory... how we could accept and follow the purpose God has for us?

We needed to create a mindful, positive, and motivational routine that would alter our outlook and create positive energy for ourselves and those around us.

Boiling it down, what was the one word that would describe what we were seeking? *Kindness.*

It was as simple as that!

According to Merriam Webster's Dictionary, ***kindness is the quality or state of being gentle and considerate to others.*** Kindness is a noun, noun being the object of a verb, or an act. *Therefore, you must act before something can be labeled "kind."*

To be described as kind, you must begin by taking actions that prove to be positive, inspirational, thoughtful, touching, selfless, caring, or charitable.

You see, no matter how small an act of kindness may be, the energy behind the act creates a feeling of joy for both the giver and the receiver. This well of emotion leads to further inspiration, and that momentum can become contagious. For the giver, knowing that the spirit of your actions linger with the recipient is more important than the gift itself. ***The magic is in the maybe, the possibility that the recipient will continue to cultivate kindness and pay it forward.*** So, when we look for the small positive moments in each day, and show gratitude for them, our awareness grows. We begin to not only notice kindness, we expect it and then cultivate it.

Great things are done by a series of small acts, and collectively we can create a kindness movement, thus Kindness for Kaenon began!

This day was formerly called “Spy Wednesday,” an allusion to the gospel accounts in which Judas is identified as the betrayer of Jesus. As Jesus endured the suffering of the cross, we are called to run the race of life with perseverance, confident of the joy to come. In the three days, which begin tomorrow evening, we will journey with Christ from darkness to light, from captivity to freedom, from death to life.

Being “real” means acknowledging the hurts and the hopes that are discovered on the journey of life. To ignore or discount one or the other is to live on the shallow side of things.

Not a day goes by without hurt. My list is long. How about yours? Take some time to name them.

Not a day goes by without hope. My list is long. Take some time to name them.

Perseverance and joy – hand in hand. Darkness and light – hand in hand. Captivity and freedom – hand in hand. Death and life – hand in hand. Saint and sinner – hand in hand. Follower and betrayer – hand in hand. Hurts and hopes – hand in hand.

We are human beings fully alive in Jesus when we embrace everything – and I mean everything. The cross leads to the empty tomb.

Almighty God, your Son our Savior suffered at human hands and endured the shame of the cross. Grant that we may walk in the way of his cross and find it the way of life and peace, Amen.

May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Galatians 6:14





Serve and Lead Together