

Grace Notes

Volume 72, Number 2

February 2020

Shane Koepke
Lead Pastor

Jennifer Gonsalves
Associate Pastor

Office Hours

8:30 am–5:00 pm
Mon, Wed–Fri
8:30 am–12:00 pm
Tue
507-373-6496

Worship Services

Sunday Morning
9:00 & 11:00 am
Wednesday Evening 5:30 pm

Sunday School

Age 4 through Adult
Sunday Morning 10:15 am
September through May

GRACE NOTES

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www.gracealbertlea.org

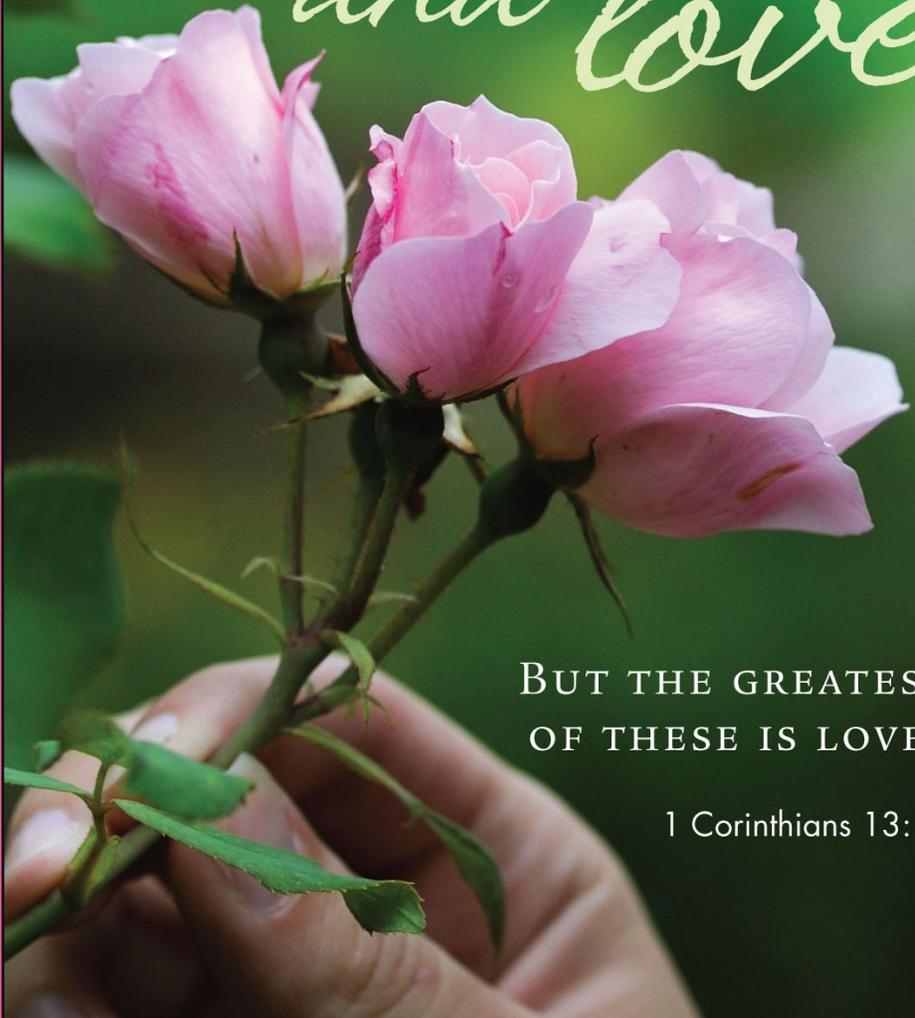
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*Grace Lutheran
Mission Statement:*

*Bringing People
Together and
Becoming Disciples
for Christ!*

AND NOW THESE THREE REMAIN:

*faith,
hope
and love.*



BUT THE GREATEST
OF THESE IS LOVE.

1 Corinthians 13:13

The Pastor's Pen



Pastor Shane Koepke
Lead Pastor
pastorshane@gracealbertlea.org

Welcome to February. The end of the month will welcome Ash Wednesday. It's a day of remembering our birth, and of course, our death. Ugh! Why did you have to use that word, pastor? Well, it's not a fun word, but it's real. It's definite. And while hard to read and probably harder to hear, especially when we think about people who have died in our lives, the reality is we will all die. But the part I want you to hear in that truth is this: God walks with us. There is nothing to be taken apart in that truth. It's as true as death itself.

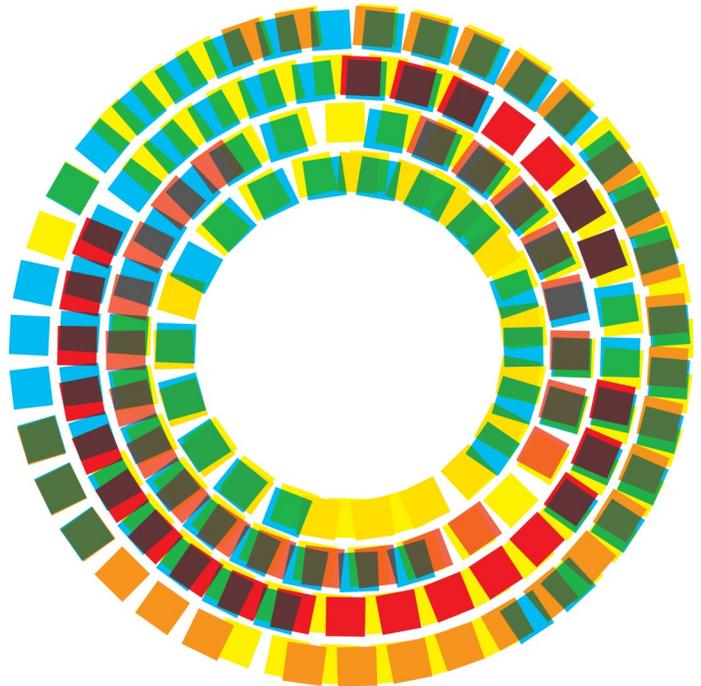
To know that God walks with us throughout our life, from birth to grave and beyond, is not a new idea here. In fact, we celebrate this truth every year at Ash Wednesday where we make the sign of the cross on our foreheads from ashes, and then we tell each other that we are born from the dust of the earth and we will return to the dust of the earth. WOW! Every year since I was little, it was an upsetting and yet powerful moment. No, I don't want to acknowledge that I will die, but yes, I want to know—nope, NEED to know that God walks through it all with me, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I pray you make time to be at Ash Wednesday worship, to come face to face with the reality of death, but also the reality of God who never abandons us, who never walks away, who ushers us into life, death and eternity.

Peace- PShane

PASTORAL ACTS FOR JANUARY

FUNERAL
Leslie "Les" Tufte



THE CHURCH AS MOSAIC

A mosaic consists of thousands of little stones. Some are blue, some are green, some are yellow, some are gold. When we bring our faces close to the mosaic, we can admire the beauty of each stone. But as we step back from it, we can see that all these little stones reveal to us a beautiful picture, telling a story none of these stones can tell by itself.

That is what our life in the church is about. Each of us is like a little stone, but together we reveal the face of God to the world. Nobody can say: "I make God visible." But others who see us together can say: "They make God visible." Christian community is where humility and glory touch.

—Henri J.M. Nouwen



AshWednesday
February 26, 2020

The Associate Pastor's Corner



Pastor Jennifer Gonsalves,
Associate Pastor
Associatepastor@gracealbertlea.org

One of my favorite things to do as your pastor is work with our Sunday School children, often teaching classes and working with our wonderful volunteers who make our children, youth and family ministry at Grace possible. Working with children, it provides us with moments where we get to see and experience God and faith through their eyes.

One such moment that stood out to me was during our Christmas program this year. Our Pre-K through 6th grade Sunday classes performed a nativity play based on the gospel of Luke. There was a mix of familiar and new characters and well-known carols and new songs written for the program. As the kids practiced and prepared for the big day, one thing became very clear: our kids had a favorite song. A song that they sang very, very loudly with huge smiles on their faces. A song that had forty-some kids belting out at the top of their lungs, "GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN! OVER THE HILLS AND EVERYWHERE! GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN THAT JESUS CHRIST IS BORN!"

As one parent told me, it was one of the most memorable renditions of "Go Tell It On the Mountain" that they had ever heard. Yes, there may have been more yelling than singing going on, you could not deny the joy that singing those words brought to our children. And as I watched them sing, I could not have been more proud of our kids, because in that moment, I thought how different the world would be if we all – adults and children – shared the good news of Jesus Christ with the same energy and enthusiasm as our Sunday School kids singing "Go Tell It On Mountain."

Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ is something we all are called to do as Christians. But it is

something that scares many of us, because what if we say the wrong thing or don't have all the right answers? Or what if instead of bringing something to the faith, we instead drive them away? But when we see our faith through the eyes of a child, we can be reminded that telling Jesus' story doesn't have to be scary, it can instead be a great joy. So don't be afraid to go tell it on a mountain or on the street or to a friend the good news that Jesus loves us all.

A PRAYER FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

Lord of the winds,
I cry to thee,
I that am dust,
and blown about
by every gust
I fly to thee.

Lord of the waters,
unto thee I call.
I that am weed
upon the waters borne,
and by the waters torn,
tossed by the waters,
at thy feet I fall.

—Mary Coleridge (1861-1907)

PASTORAL CARE

To assist Pastor Shane and Pastor Jennifer in providing pastoral care for those hospitalized or homebound, please notify them of pending surgeries, overnight hospital stays, or individuals who would like a home visit. Hospital personnel do not always notify our church of our members who are in the hospital.

Musings



Deacon Robert Tewes,
Director of Worship and Music
music@gracealbertlea.org

“Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

These familiar words from the fifth chapter of Matthew are frequently spoken to those who are baptized. As the baptized is presented with a baptismal candle, lit, shining so all can see, these words are the charge for the newly baptized, to help spread Christ’s light into an often-darkened world.

These words are particularly meaningful during this season of the Sundays after Epiphany, where we see the work of Jesus’ love spreading throughout

the world, cascading, illuminating our way before us. Images of light abound within the Bible. The Psalmist extols God’s word, as “the lamp unto our feet and the light upon our path.” Brightness seems to spread throughout our hemisphere, with the hours of daylight growing exceedingly longer during this season, as we near the promise of spring’s new life.

As you continue to welcome Jesus—the promised Savior of the world who came to us at Christmas (when the days were shortest and the darkness the deepest)—remember to walk as a Child of the Light, spreading joy, peace, justice and mercy like the flame of that baptismal candle that was once presented to you when you, too, were challenged to “let your light so shine before others...”

Deacon Robert Tewes

CINEMA AND POPCORN (CAP) MOVIE NIGHTS

Come join David Larson and Gary Schindler to view and discuss three movies that are sure to stimulate some lively discussion that is relevant to our Christian walk in this world. CAP meets in the Fireside Room at 6:30 pm. Snacks and beverages are provided.

Green Book – Friday, February 21

When Tony Lip, a bouncer from an Italian-American neighborhood in the Bronx, is hired to drive Dr. Don Shirley, a world-class Black pianist, on a concert tour from Manhattan to the Deep South, they must rely on "The Green Book" to guide them to the few establishments that were then safe for African-Americans. Confronted with racism, danger, as well as unexpected humanity and humor, they are forced to set aside differences to survive and thrive on the journey of a lifetime.

Freedom Writers – Friday, March 20

A dedicated California teacher finds a way to unify her disadvantaged, racially-divided students and to improve their grasp of academics, partly by having them keep journals about their violent, troubled lives.

The Blind Side – Friday, April 17

Taken in by a well-to-do family and offered a second chance at life, a homeless teen grows to become the star athlete projected to be the first pick at the NFL draft in this sports-themed comedy drama inspired by author Michael Lewis' best-seller *The Blind Side: Evolution of a Game*. Michael Oher was living on the streets when he was welcomed into the home of a conservative suburban family, but over time he matured into a talented athlete. As the NFL draft approaches, fans and sports radio personalities alike speculate that Oher will be the hottest pick of the year.

Grace Children, Youth and Family Ministry



Ashley Kuhlman,
Youth Director
youth@gracealbertlea.org

Thank you to everyone who helped with the Annual Meeting Lunch, including Mrs. Gerry's for providing Potato Salad! All proceeds went towards our high school summer trip to Lake Superior this summer. We are very thankful for our supporting congregation and excited for our trip!

Last month brought a weekend of extreme weather, so a few of our events have been moved, including family movie day & Mount Kato trip. Check out some of our upcoming events below for things that are coming up in February.

February Calendar:

- Sundays:** 10:15am Sunday School
- Wednesdays:** 6:00pm Chew n Chat & 6:30pm Confirmation & Youth Group
- February 15:** Family Movie Day
- February 23:** 7th – 12th Grade Mount Kato
- February 19:** Confirmation Parent Night
- February 26:** No Chew n Chat, Confirmation Class or Youth Group (Ash Wednesday)

9th – 12th Grade Youth Group will be meeting most of the Wednesdays in February. This is a great opportunity for high schoolers to gather for fellowship and talking about God in our daily lives while taking a break from school/work/sports/etc. We will have times of devotions, fun and service projects.

Looking for congregation members for Confirmation project. During Lent this year, our Confirmation youth will be working on a project that involves interviewing and talking with different congregation members. We are looking for anyone interested in having a discussion with the youth about their involvement at Grace and part of their faith journey. Sign up in the Narthex, and Ashley will contact you with more information.

Mount Kato Trip (7th – 12th Grade) We will be going to Mount Kato again with First Lutheran Church! We will be going on February 23rd from 1:00 – 9:00pm. You can sign up for either 3 hours of tubing for \$10 or downhill skiing for the whole afternoon for \$30. Please sign up with Ashley by February 19th if you plan to attend. Looking for chaperones to join us!

Confirmation Parent Night. On February 19th we will be having a parent night during Confirmation. Youth and families will be learning about a project they'll be working on during Lent and other expectations during the season. 7th graders and parents will also gain more details about Confirmation Camp this summer. More information will be sent to families ahead of time.

Youth @ Grace Instagram Interested in the latest updates or photos for our 7th – 12th grade programming? Follow our Youth Instagram account @youthgracealbertlea. Upcoming events, photos and more are posted on there!

Family **MOVIE DAY**

FEBRUARY 15TH AT 2PM

GRACE WILL SHOW A MOVIE FOR KIDS AND ADULTS OF ALL AGES. JOIN US AS WE WATCH, EAT POPCORN AND DISCUSS HOW THIS MYSTERY FILM RELATES TO OUR LIVES AND OUR FAITH.

Parish Nurse Notes



Lori Tuchtenhagen,
Parish Nurse
parishnurse@gracealbertlea.org

Dear Friends of Grace Lutheran,
In February, we recognize Valentine's Day, American Heart Month and Sleep Safety Month. One concern close to our hearts is Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. SIDS accounts for more deaths than any other cause in children from one week to one year of age. Each year in the United States, 7,000+ infants die because of SIDS. SIDS refers to a sudden death of any infant which is unexplained by history or examination. The specific way in which SIDS kills is not known at this time. What can you do to protect your child from SIDS? The following guidelines do not offer perfect protection, but rather reduce known risk factors. Protect all children from smoke (including smoking during pregnancy and exposure to second-hand smoke after birth), position full-term infants as per

recommended by your pediatrician for sleep, place infants on flat mattresses without pillows and use light clothing, or bedding, protecting baby from getting too hot or cold.

May we continue to care for each other as we support parents raising infants.

May God Bless You,
Lori Tuchtenhagen,
Parish Nurse.



Grace Activities

FRIENDS

FRIENDS: Happy Valentine's Day. Friends of Grace will be celebrating Valentine's Day on **Sunday, February 9th** at 5:00 pm in the Fireside Room. Attendees are asked to bring a dish of hors d'oeuvres. Beverages will be provided

WELCA

WELCA would like to invite the women of Grace Lutheran Church to the **Thursday, February 13** meeting. We will be meeting in the Fireside Room at 6:00 pm. This meeting is for all women of Grace, not just the officers. Come join us for an evening of socializing and planning for the new year. Please call Jane Smith at 715-347-4036 if you have any questions.



GRACE FOR WOMEN

Grace for Women will be meeting **February 9th** at 10:00 am. All young to middle-aged women are invited to gather in the lower level conference room for a time of filling our cups and connecting with our fellow women!

GRACE SENIORS

The Grace Seniors will meet at Wok N Roll in Albert Lea on **February 12** at 12:00 pm. This will be our final meeting. We hope that everyone will come and support us in closing our long run. Thank you for all your support over the years. See you there.

Church Council Minutes

January 14, 2020

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
President Timms called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.
2. Opening Devotions: Corrine Tims
Tims shared Synod materials that showcased St. Augustine Lutheran in Guatemala. The church is built on a rock and has a mission related to health care. We were encouraged to explore Grace's mission as we move into a new decade.
3. Open Forum
LaFrance gave an update on the restroom project. See Nine below
4. Approval of Today's Agenda –
MSA (Moved, Seconded, Approved) by Munyer and Lange to approve the agenda as presented.
5. Budget 2019 Update: Dave Drommerhausen
Dave Drommerhausen provided a year-end summary of the 2019 budget. Highlights included:
 - We ended the year with a closing cash balance of \$78,600. The Council agreed that a balance of \$100,000 is a target to address cash flow needs.
 - Spending for 2019 was \$57,000 under the approved budget for the year. Some of this was attributed to reduced personnel expenditures, energy savings from the new boiler system, and a reduced Synod benevolence for the year based on congregational giving in 2019.
 - Giving was off \$40,000 to meet budgeted needs and would have been \$100,000 without the endowment from a Grace member.
6. Review of 2020 Budget: Dave Drommerhausen, Tewes (Patty), and Schindler reviewed the proposed budget for 2020. The proposed budget for 2020 is \$7,400 less than the approved budget for 2019. MSA by Munyer and Groeneweg to approve the 2020 budget.
7. Approval of Minutes - Tabled to February
Schindler sought clarification on a motion related to the church constitution and the incorporation of ELCA model constitution provisions.
8. Reports
Lead Pastor Report: Pastor Koepke
 - Pastor noted that the 75th anniversary (November 14, 1946) of Grace Lutheran is in 2021. A suggested theme for our observance of the anniversary was "Past, Present, and Future". October 2021 was considered as a month to celebrate the anniversary and the plan is to invite the bishop to join us.
 - Strategic planning action planning will be conducted throughout 2020.
 - Noted that the Tanzania mission trip to the International Health Partners facilities is September 1-15.
 - Performance reviews have been completed.Associate Pastor Report: Pastor Gonsalves
 - Christmas services, the Sunday School Christmas Program, and the Advent Festival was successful and well attended.
 - A Family Movie Event is planned for Saturday January 18 with the movie "Zootopia".Commission & Committee Report Highlights
 - BAG: Assistance to cars when parking lot is icy. A work group explored the idea and determined that for the time being members should be encouraged to keep an eye out for members in need of assistance walking across the parking lot.

Continued on page 12

Gifts of Love

BACKPACK FOOD PROGRAMS

In Memory Of:

Deloris Klitz (mother of Jeanne (Gary) Schindler) given by Jim & Judy Munyer

Betty Cashin (mother of Nancy Hoium) given by Bob & Muriel Hoeg, David & Julie Drommerhausen

Zoila Calderon given by Barbara Tullberg

Paul Cooper given by Kathie & Phil Rogers, Lowell & Barb Peterson, Jim & Judy Munyer

Gifts Given By:

Jeshua & Jennifer Erickson, Angela & Joshua Barker, Don & Melody Munden, Roger & Reta Draayer, Randy & Lynn Stay, Story Show, Dale & Dorothy Baldwin, Central Freeborn Sunday School & Dinner, Day Breakers Kiwanis Club

BALL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

In Memory Of:

Gerald Deboer given by Bob Ball & Laura McKibben

In Honor Of:

Arik Matson given by Bob Ball & Laura McKibben

BOILER/BUILDING/ROOF/FURNACE FUND

In Memory Of:

Donald Porter given by Mildred Jensen

Gifts Given By:

Carroll & Mavis Hanson, Randy & Lori Tuchtenhagen

FOOD SHELF

In Memory Of:

Allen Menssen given by Judy Menssen

GRACE FOUNDATION

In Memory Of:

Gar Petersen given by Paul & Dorothy Field

LOVE OFFERING

In Memory Of:

Carole Nelson on her 77th Birthday given by Rodger Nelson

Deloris Klitz (mother of Jeanne (Gary) Schindler) given by Roxann Brue

Betty Cashin (mother of Nancy Hoium) given by Roxann Brue

Warren Severtson (brother-in-law of Rodger Nelson) given by Gary & Karen Ohlman

Les Tufte given by Carlyn Tufte

Gifts Given By:

Ed & Julie Groeneweg

LU RYAN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

In Memory Of:

Lu Ryan given by Faith Ryan

MARTIN LUTHER FUND

In Memory Of:

Betty Cashin (mother of Nancy Hoium) given by William & Jane Buege, Hazel Spiering

Deloris Klitz (mother of Jeanne (Gary) Schindler) given by Hazel Spiering

Gifts Given By:

Dale & Dorothy Baldwin

MUSIC MINISTRY

In Memory Of:

Wendy (Miller) Lane (daughter of Bob & Doris Miller) given by Bob & Doris Miller, Kandy Nelson, Kenneth & Athelene Gerber

Elizabeth Cashin given by Mick & Becky Hanson

PARISH NURSE FUND

In Memory Of:

Clarice B. Porter given by Betty Blesi Massie

PRAYER GARDEN

In Memory Of:

Julie Jaspersen given by Kent Jaspersen

PLEASE NOTE that any additional "Gifts of Love" recorded by the church office after January 26, 2020 will appear in the next issue. If you have given a gift and your name has not been recorded, please call the church office so the correction can be made. Thank you.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						
2 Presentation of Our Lord 8:30a Fair Trade Coffee 9:00a Worship Service 10:05a Coffee Fellowship 10:05a Adult Forum 10:05a Sunday School 11:00a Worship Service	3 10:00a 500 Card Club 1:30p SAIL 4:00p Health Cabinet Meeting 5:15p Mary Circle 6:00p Hardanger Group	4 9:00a Staff Meeting 10:00a Ladies Bible St.	5 9:00a Sewing Day 4:30p Cherub & Chancel Choirs 5:30p Grace at the Table 6:30p Bells of Praise 6:30p Youth Group 6:30p Confirmation 7:30p Adult Choir	6 6:00a Early Bible Study 1:30p SAIL 6:00p WELCA Mtg.	7	8
9 9:00a Worship Service 10:05a Coffee Fellowship 10:05a Adult Forum 10:05a Sunday School 10:05a Grace for Women 11:00a Worship Service 5:00p Friends	10 10:00a 500 Card Club 1:30p SAIL 5:15p Mary Circle 6:00p Hardanger Group 7:00p MS Society Mtg	11 9:00a Staff Meeting 10:00a Ladies Bible St. 6:00p Ministry Teams 6:30p Council Meeting	12 4:30p Cherub & Chancel Choirs 5:30p Worship Service 6:00p Chew n Chat 6:30p Bells of Praise 6:30p Youth Group 6:30p Confirmation 7:30p Adult Choir	13 6:00a Early Bible Study 1:30p SAIL 6:00p WELCA Mtg.	14 	15 Newsletter Deadline 2:00p Family Movie Day
16 9:00a Worship Service 10:05a Coffee Fellowship 10:05a Adult Forum 10:05a Sunday School 11:00a Worship Service	17 10:00a 500 Card Club 1:30p SAIL 5:00p Hardanger Group	18 9:00a Staff Meeting 10:00a Ladies Bible St.	19 9:00a Sewing Day 4:30p Cherub & Chancel Choirs 5:30p Worship Service 6:00p Chew n Chat 6:30p Bells of Praise 6:30p Youth Group 6:30p Confirmation 7:30p Adult Choir	20 6:00a Early Bible Study 1:30p SAIL	21 6:30p CAP: Cinema and Popcorn "Green Book"	22
23 Transfiguration of Our Lord 9:00a Worship Service 10:05a Coffee Fellowship 10:05a Adult Forum 10:05a Sunday School 11:00a Worship Service 1:00p Ski Trip (7th-12 Gr.)	24 10:00a 500 Card Club 10:00a Men Support Group 1:30p SAIL 6:00p Hardanger Group	25 Shrove Tuesday 9:00a Staff Meeting 9:30a Lois Circle 10:00a Ladies Bible St.	26 Ash Wednesday 9:15a Martha Circle 4:30p Cherub & Chancel Choirs 6:00p Lenten Supper 6:00p NO Chew n Chat 6:15p Bells of Praise 6:30p NO Youth Group 6:30p NO Confirmation 7:00p Worship Service 7:45p Adult Choir	27 6:00a Early Bible Study 1:30p SAIL	28 10:00a Grace Notes Mail Prep for mailing	29 

Grace Prays

Prayers of Healing

Kay Goodmanson

Kathy Diaz

Betty Lou Anderson

Evie Read

(Mother of Sarah Stay)

Elaine Long

Truman & Barbara Thron

Arik Matson

(Son of Sheila Matson, Tim Matson and grandson of Ray and Joyce Langerud)

Prayers for those Grieving

Family & Friends of Zoila Calderon

(Grandmother of Bryan [Sheila] Calderon, great-grandmother of Axel, Aidric & Ari Calderon, sister of Diane Olson)

Family & Friends of Leslie "Les" Tufte

Family & Friends of Donald "Forry" Porter

Prayers of Joy

**For all who attended the Annual Meeting.
For the hands that made the meal and served
it for the Annual Meeting.**

(If you know anyone needing prayers of our congregation, please let us know so we can include them on our list. Requests for the Prayer Chain can be arranged by calling the church office.)

February

(The list below is to remind us to pray for our Grace family members on the following dates.)

1. Kathryn Peterson
2. Mary Peterson
3. Ross & Shelly Peterson, Robert, Ryan
4. Solveig Peterson
5. Scott & Analynn Peterson
6. Terry & Nancy Peterson
7. Josh & Stacy Pfenning, Grace
8. Linda Pierick
9. Mary Pirsig
10. Mike & Pam Pleiss, Kristopher, Abby
11. Doreen Pontow
12. Sally Pratt
13. Shawn & Lisa Pihoda
14. Dan & Joyce Purdy
15. Jim & Jenn Quiram
16. Dennis & Teresa Raatz, Megan
17. Dustin & Kim Rafdal, Mason, Gavin
18. Steve Rafdal
19. Orvis Rake
20. David Rake
21. Susan Ranney
22. Gail Rasmussen
23. Lynn Rasmussen
24. Mark & Lynnette Rasmussen
25. Robert Rasmussen
26. Mark & Danielle Raygor
27. Kelvin & Amy Rehnelt, Sydney, Rachel
28. Lisa Rippentrop, Fallon
29. Preston & Heidi Robeck, Jacy, Brennan

February



Caring and Sharing

**Co-Chairperson: Hazel Spiering,
Judy Christenson, Lester Perschbacher**

Nancy Boyer
Sharon Brua
Linda & Ronnie Bryan
Tricia & Jerry Dahl
Dorothy & Paul Field
Sandra Godtland
Julie & Kevin Grahn
Judy & Marvin Gulbrandson
Darlene & Richard Jordahl
Irmi & Gerhard Kleih
Ginny & Rick Loberg
Sheila Matson
Suzanne & Max Mauer
Judy Mondeel
Regis & Robert Olson
Lynnette & Mark Rasmussen
Carol Roberts
Beth & John Ruud
Patricia & Bill Searles
Sandy & Pastor Peter Soli
Sarah & Matt Stay
Connie Wadding
Mianne & Ross Wittmer

OUR THANKS to Jane Madson and Carlyn Tufte for serving as chairwomen for January Caring and Sharing; and to all who volunteered to help and/or provide food. Your help was appreciated.

STUDY OPPORTUNITIES for Adults at Grace

We invite you to join any of our regular Bible study groups at Grace Lutheran.

Sunday Morning Adult Forum September — May

Come join us at 10:05 am Sunday mornings.

Tuesday Morning Bible Study

Tuesday mornings, 10:00-11:00 am
(*Fireside Room*)

This study for women offers fellowship, singing, and great discussion.

Thursday Morning Bible Study

6:00-7:00 am (*Kitchen*)

Consider joining this group where there is an opportunity for good discussion and good fellowship, along with good coffee and treats!

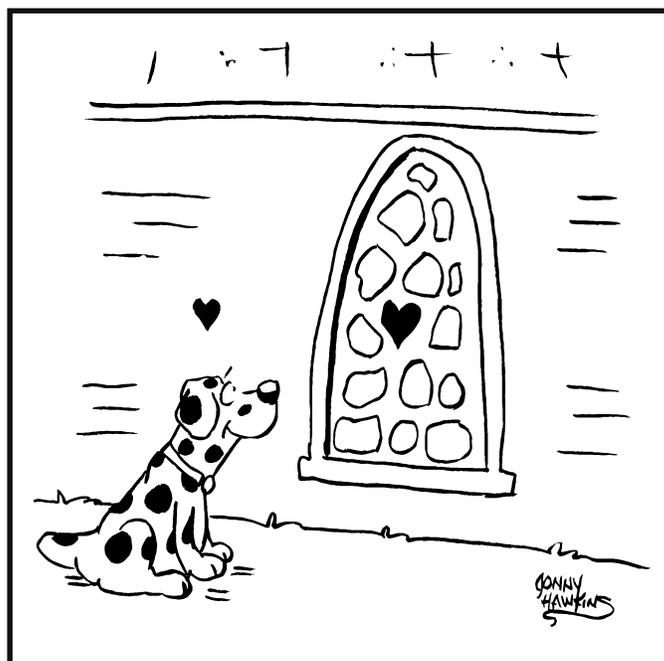
Grace WELCA Women's Circles

Mary Circle (meeting 1st Monday, 5:15 pm)

Lois Circle (meeting 4th Tuesday, 9:30 am)

Martha Circle (meeting 4th Wednesday, 9:30 am)

New members are always welcome! Call the church office, 373-6496, for more information.



Church Council Minutes Continued

9. Old Business

- Capital Campaign
Schindler reported that giving in December was \$3,700. The funds collected to date for the campaign are \$1,058,000. There is currently \$155,000 cash-on-hand for the restroom project.
- Bathroom remodeling: Update
LaFrance reported that carpentry (Lemke), plumbing (Master Plumbing), and asbestos removal bids and plans have been made for the project. The first step in the project will be asbestos removal; which will start in February. He noted that portions of the floor on the lower level will be removed and replaced as part of the construction activities. In addition, an architect will be hired to develop plans for the wall removal and reconstruction. Costs are being tabulated and a final cost may approach \$175,000 to \$200,000.
- Strategic planning update: Strategic Planning Team
Operationalization of the plan will start in 2020.

- Annual Meeting: January 26, 2020 at Noon
 - ◇ Thank you to those going off the council
 - ◇ Open positions on Council & Committees include a need for two Council members and a person to complete Thron's term. Tims expressed an interest in pursuing another term. Youth membership will include two new members.

10. New/Other Business

- Tasks to Complete Prior to Next Council Meeting – Nothing to report
- Any other business – Nothing to report

11. Prayer Intercessions – Pastor Jennifer led the Council in prayer.

12. Adjournment – MSA by Lange and Munyer to adjourn.

Respectively submitted,
Gary Schindler
Grace Lutheran Church Council Secretary



Drop off donations in the Narthex. Help to fill a need in our community. Thank you for all your support.

In February we are focusing on easily prepared foods.

For Example:

- Complete Microwave Meals
- Cans of Stew or Chili
- Soups in a Can or Bag
- Boxes of Macaroni & Cheese Meals





CREATION CARE CORNER

Climate research indicates that 2019 was the second hottest year on record overall, and the warmest year on record for our oceans.

John Abraham, a Minnesota climate researcher from the University of St. Thomas and co-author of a study on ocean temperatures that appeared in the journal *Advances in Atmospheric Sciences*, stated in an interview with *Inside Climate News*, "It is critical to understand how fast things are changing. This problem is not going to go away, it is getting worse. We are already seeing the impacts of warming on society, from rising sea levels to hotter waters to more intense storms and to more wild weather."

He continued, "But the problem is solvable. The first thing we need to do is use energy more wisely. Let's not waste energy for no reason. Let's make our cars, homes and workplaces more efficient. In the end, we will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save money."

Will people of faith be a witness to future generations by caring for God's creation and passing on a livable climate?

"Our children are the living messages we send to a future we will never see. Will we rob them of their destiny? Will we rob them of their dreams? No, we will not do that." -Elijah Cummings

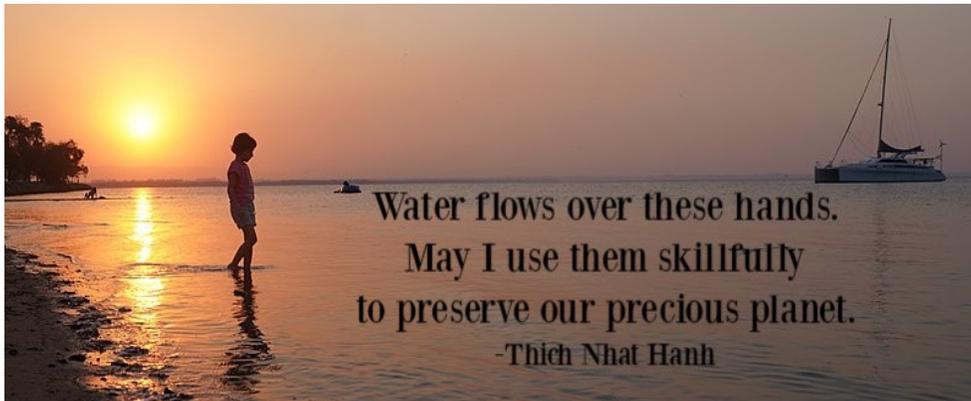


Image: Australian bushfire sunset, Wikimedia Commons

LENTEN FOCUS

Lent, the church-year season that begins on Ash Wednesday, is a time of penitence and spiritual renewal. Some people give up a luxury or vice during Lent as a form of self-denial; others undertake a project that benefits others.

The point isn't to denigrate ourselves or to see how much we can do without. Instead, Lent helps us reflect on Jesus' death. As Timothy Keller writes in *The Reason for God*: "The Christian Gospel is that I am so flawed that Jesus had to die for me, yet I am so loved and valued that Jesus was glad to die for me. This leads to deep humility and deep confidence at the same time. It undermines both swaggering and sniveling. I cannot feel superior to anyone, and yet I have nothing to prove to anyone. I do not think more of myself nor less of myself. Instead, I think of myself less."



QUARTERS FOR WORLD HUNGER

February and Valentine’s Day are synonymous. We think of sending our friends and loved ones valentines to tell them how much we care. It is estimated that about 11 percent of all people in our world are hungry every day due to a variety of reasons. The recent earthquakes in Puerto Rico, and the wildfires in Australia add to the suffering. ELCA World Hunger is uniquely positioned to reach communities in need. Your gifts to ELCA World Hunger make it possible for the ELCA to respond to the continuing need. Think about sending a “valentine” to the hungry people of the world by dropping some extra quarters in the offering plate, or making a special gift to ELCA World Hunger. Thank you for caring.



The Caring & Sharing **still needs co-chairs** for the months of **July, August, September and November**. The sign-up sheet for 2020 is located in the Narthex. Please consider being a co-chair for one of the months listed above. WELCA thanks you for giving of your time in serving our Grace community.

 **FAIR TRADE COFFEE**
Sunday, February 2

 Remember your Coins for Sunday’s Noisy Offering

GENEROSITY AT GRACE

December 2019

December Attendance: 1,812

December Giving: \$105,634

December Expenses: \$57,899

Year-to-date giving vs expenses: \$19,432

The Finance Ministry Team and Church Council appreciate your generous support. Your faithful stewardship is essential for us to continue to support our ministries at Grace Lutheran.

INSTUMENTS OF PRAISE

Some innovative musicians play instruments that actually melt at their fingertips. Their ice creations — everything from drums and a pipe organ to harps and didgeridoos — make awe-inspiring sounds (search online to hear for yourself).

The unique challenges posed by dissolving instruments seem to increase their impact. “ICEstruments” sculptor Tim Linhart says concertgoers, whose bodies also are largely composed of water, often feel a “spiritual connection” to the music.

Although people don’t melt, our physical bodies eventually return to ashes and dust. Despite that impermanence, God created us as wonderful instruments to make joyful noises for him: “Let everything that has breath praise the LORD!” (Psalm 150:6). —adapted from *The Wired Word*

Annual Meeting

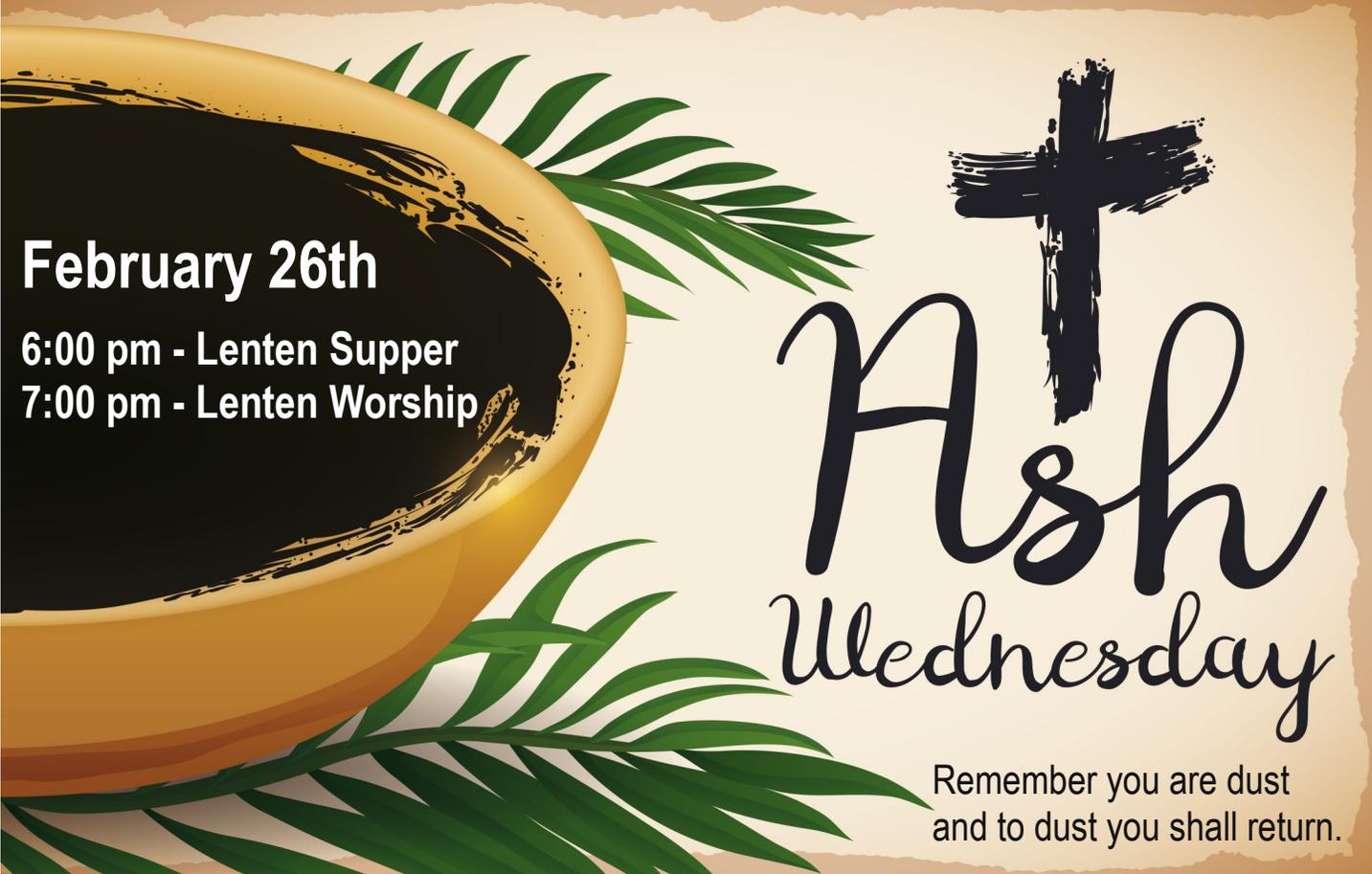


A big thank you to everyone who came and for your interest in the future of Grace.

February 26th

6:00 pm - Lenten Supper

7:00 pm - Lenten Worship



**Ash
Wednesday**

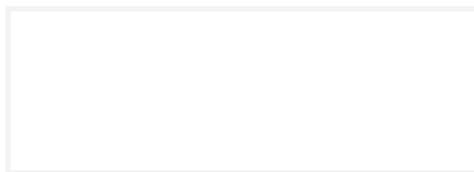
Remember you are dust
and to dust you shall return.

Grace Lutheran Church
918 Garfield Avenue
Albert Lea, MN 56007

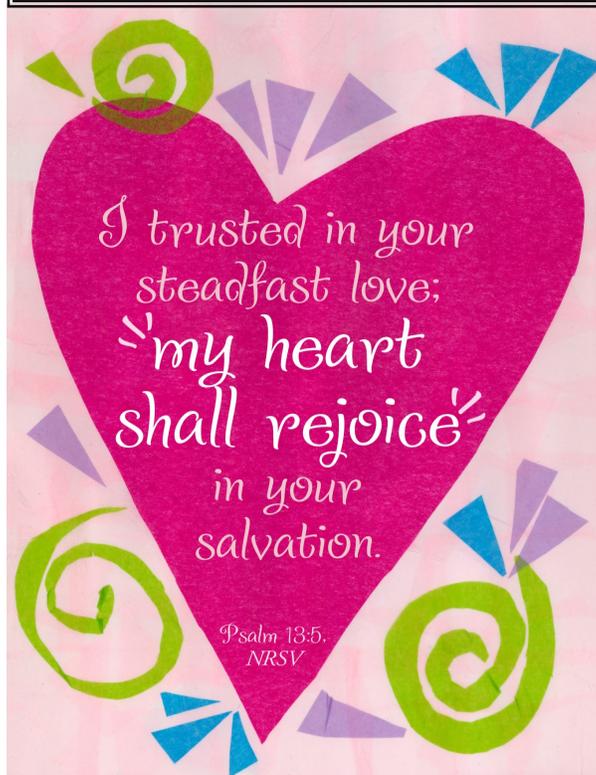
Telephone: 507-373-6496
Email: office@gracealbertlea.org



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Winter Worship Service Schedule



**Sunday Worship Service
at 9:00 am & 11:00 am**

**Classes for age 4 through
Adult at 10:05-11:00 am**

**Wednesday Evening Worship
at 5:30 pm**

**Join your Grace family each week
in worship, study and fellowship!**