

# Grace Notes

Volume 72, Number 4

April 2020

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**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 am  
Online only until further notice.

**Sunday School**

Postpone until further notice  
due to Covid-19.

**GRACE NOTES**

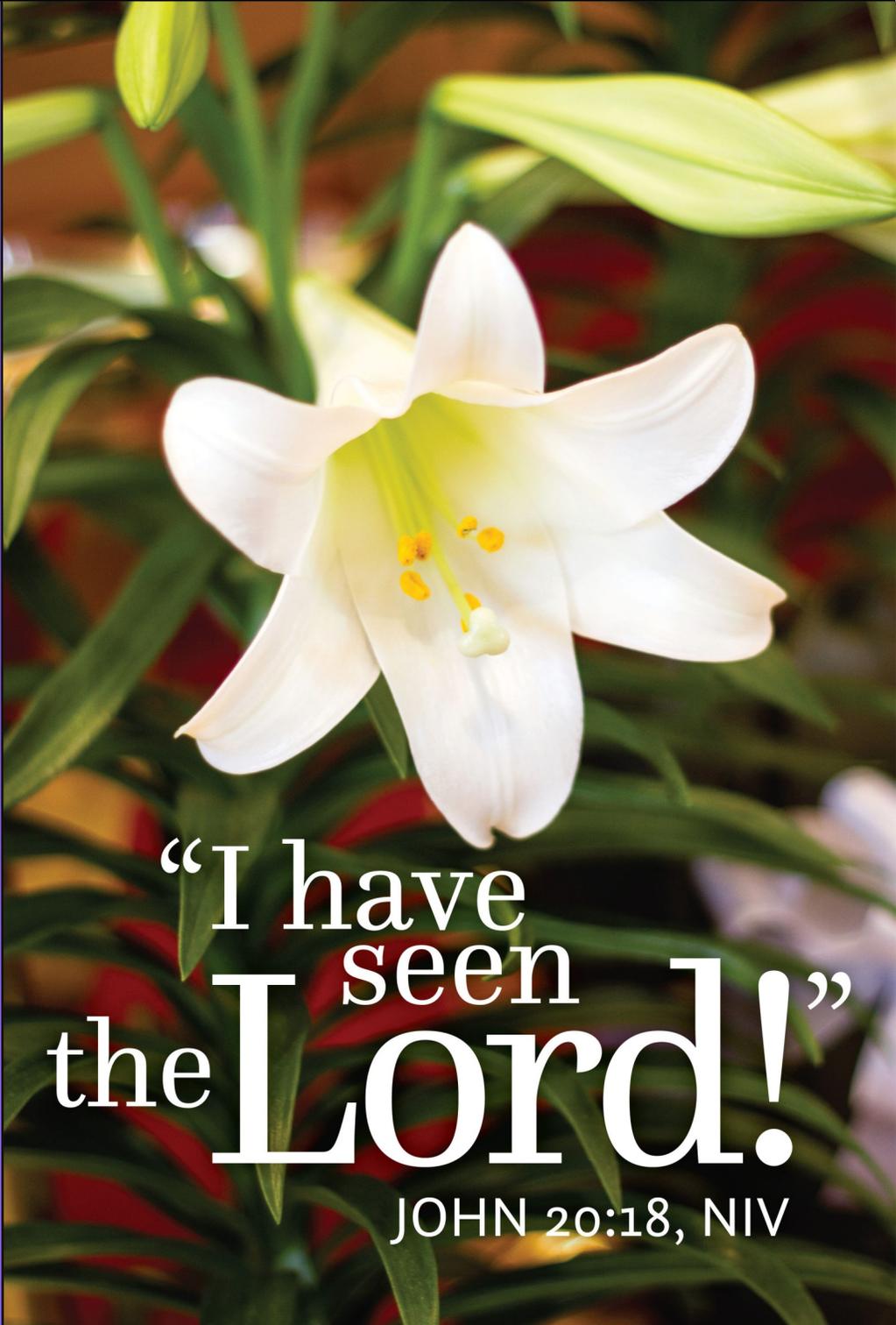
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*Grace Lutheran  
Mission Statement:*

*Bringing People  
Together and  
Becoming Disciples  
for Christ!*



“I have  
seen  
the **Lord!**”

JOHN 20:18, NIV

# The Pastor's Pen



Pastor Shane Koepke  
*Lead Pastor*  
pastorshane@gracealbertlea.org

Well, these are interesting days around church, the community and the world. So...take a deep breath. Let it out. Repeat. Let a prayer of need come on your inhale, let a prayer of thanksgiving go with your exhale.

Ok, so we won't be meeting in person for the next few weeks at a minimum, longer if needed. No time in our generations have we been asked to stay away from each other during a national emergency. So, we are being creative how to be the church together and yet at safe distances.

1. We will provide online worship each Wednesday and Sunday at [www.gracealbertlea.org](http://www.gracealbertlea.org)
2. We will continue to be present to everyone as needed. Please call pastor Shane or Pastor Jennifer. Our cell phone numbers are located on the front of the newsletter
3. Continue to support your church through online giving or mailing in your offering.
4. Call people you know who don't have internet or are socially isolated, on top of being socially distant. For some, church is regular and sometimes the only place they receive interaction and physical touch.
5. Be kind to yourself. Be graceful, and allow yourself to take the time you need in the midst of caring for others.

Find our Facebook page [facebook.com/Gracealbertlea](https://facebook.com/Gracealbertlea) and click the **LIKE** button on our page. Then, you will be notified of everything we are doing. Online Bible studies, daily devotionals, worship and other ideas will be available.

We are the church, gathered and yet separate. Grace is taking steps to stay in contact with you. Why? Because it's important to show God's love in

the midst of the uncertainty and distancing. Psalm 23 says "...I walk in the valley of the shadow of death..." it's not death that the Psalmist is in the middle of, it's the shadow of death. It's the shadow of things that might be. It's the shade of what could be. It's scary because it's so uncertain, and yet, as the Psalm continues "...I fear no evil; for you (The LORD) are with me..." Let's remember that God is with us in these days that can feel rather shadowy. Reach out to one another, live beyond fear and into the trust of God.

Peace as you journey- PShane

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## REMEMBERING DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

The Christian church commemorates Dietrich Bonhoeffer — pastor, theologian, anti-Nazi spy — on April 9, the anniversary of his 1945 martyrdom. Among his much-loved writings are nuggets of wisdom such as these:

"Judging others makes us blind, whereas love is illuminating. By judging others we blind ourselves to our own evil and to the grace which others are just as entitled to as we are." (*The Cost of Discipleship*)

"In normal life we hardly realize how much more we receive than we give, and life cannot be rich without such gratitude. It is so easy to overestimate the importance of our own achievements compared with what we owe to the help of others." (*Letters and Papers from Prison*)

"The table fellowship of Christians implies obligation. It is our daily bread that we eat, not my own. We share our bread. Thus we are firmly bound to one another not only in the Spirit, but in our whole physical being. The one bread that is given to our fellowship links us together in a firm covenant." (*Life Together*)

## The Associate Pastor's Corner



Pastor Jennifer Gonsalves,  
*Associate Pastor*  
Associatepastor@gracealbertlea.org

"I never expected to give up this much for Lent."

Those words showed up on my Facebook feed this week and stopped me in my tracks, because they rang true. We are use to giving up some small things like chocolate or soda. We are use to committing to spend more time reading our Bible or attending an extra church service, but our lives go on pretty much as normal whether it is Lent or not. And then COVID-19 appeared and spread, and we are now being asked to give up more than we ever imagined possible.

To protect the most vulnerable among us, we are being asked to socially distance ourselves. And so we are giving up going to school or work. We are giving up going to a restaurant or a store. We are giving up sports. We are giving up travel. We are giving up in-person worship and church activities. We are giving up social events and time spent with friends. We are giving up visiting friends and family in nursing homes. We are giving up handshakes and hugs. We are giving up touch. And that's hard. We are wired in crisis to seek our community, to come together in church, to pray, to sing and to support one another, and we are being told that we can't do that right now.

So in the midst of this uncertainty, cling to the things that we have not and will never have to give up. We are not and will not give up community. Physical distance does mean we are alone. Call a friend, write a letter, connect online. Be the body of Christ even when we are physically apart.

We are not and will never give up love. All these sacrifices we are making, we are making out of love. Love for the most vulnerable among us. Love for the health workers who will be caring for us in

this time. Love for our family, friends and strangers as we pray for their health and healing.

And we are not and will never give up faith. God is with us in this uncertain time and God promises to always be with us in life and in death. No matter what happens, we will never be somewhere where God is not present. Take comfort in God's presence, and even on the days when having faith is hard, know that God will not abandon or forsake you, for you are a beloved and precious child of God.

People of Grace, I love you. My prayers are with you when we are apart. Please know that even if we cannot meet in person, I am just a phone call away and I would love to talk, to pray, and to be with you however I can.

Peace, Pastor Jen

### PASTORAL ACTS FOR MARCH

#### BAPTISM

Reid Hatland

(Parents: Jess & Matt Hatland)

#### FUNERAL

Edna Herfindahl

### ALL THINGS IN COMMON

Just as the bread is made out of many grains ground and mixed together, and out of the bodies of many grains there comes the body of one bread in which each grain loses its form and body and takes upon itself the common body of the bread; and just as the drops of wine, in losing their own form, become the body of one common wine and drink — so it is and should be with us.

Through the interchange of [Christ's] blessings and our misfortunes, we become one loaf, one bread, one body, one drink, and have all things in common.

—Martin Luther, *Treatise on the Blessed Sacrament*

# Musings



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

A nugget of insight that I received while I was a student at Valparaiso University was a long-standing practice in the town churches of Germany with regards to the use of their church bells. It has been their practice that each time the congregation gathers for worship, the church bells ring out at the point of the service when they pray the Lord's Prayer. They do this to announce to everyone within earshot of their church building, that they should stop whatever they are doing—whether at home or at work—to join with the gathered body of Christ and pray the Lord's Prayer together.

## Why the Lord's Prayer?

For several reasons. First, and foremost, it was the prayer that Jesus taught us how to pray. It invites us into the compassionate heart of God. A compassionate God whom Jesus calls "Daddy." Jesus invites us to call his Father the same intimate name with which he addresses him. Additionally, the Lord's Prayer invites us to remember we are first and foremost a community of faith. This is an important point to remember in this stressful time. We are also reminded in this prayer to rely on God for our daily bread (not hoarding more than we need each day). We are reminded to seek reconciliation with our neighbor by forgiving them and asking them to forgive us. We also pray in this prayer that we (a corporate, plural pronoun—eg. not "me") would be delivered from evil-and-trying situations. Certainly that is a petition we all share in these days of uncertainty and fear.

Living out the practice of the German churches referenced above, Grace plans to ring its church bell every Sunday at 9 a.m. as a reminder that the church, gathered in private homes temporarily for the health protection of our community, is still the

body of Christ and is encouraged to stop whatever is being done and join in the prayer that Jesus taught us: the prayer in which our faith resides. May this practice remind us of the importance of our community—the body of Christ—even as we live in seclusion and isolation until it is safe to return to our customary lives and routines.

Peace to you and your families,  
 Deacon Robert Tewes

**PUZZLE**

*Picturing the Lord's Supper*

Jesus ate the Passover meal with his disciples as a symbol of the new covenant.

Directions: Use the picture clues to fill in key words from Luke 22:19-20, NIV.

And he took \_\_\_\_\_, gave \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my \_\_\_\_\_ given for you; do this in \_\_\_\_\_ of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This \_\_\_\_\_ is the new \_\_\_\_\_ in my blood, which is \_\_\_\_\_ out for you."

LUKE 22:19-20, NIV

Answer: bread, thanks, broke, poured, cup, covenant, remembrance, body, broke, thanks, poured

# Grace Children, Youth and Family Ministry



Ashley Kuhlman,  
*Youth Director*  
youth@gracealbertlea.org  
1-651-280-9502

During Lent this year, we asked our Confirmation youth to spend the season working on a project called, "Faith Family Tree". This project includes three different parts:

**Step 1: Interview 3 different people** (A parent/guardian, a sponsor/godparent or family member; a congregation member). This is time to get to know people, their faith stories and learn who has influenced them on their faith journey.

**Step 2: Create a Visual of your Faith Family Tree.** Who are people who have supported you on your faith journey? Create something that you can display of who is part of your Faith Family Tree

**Step 3: Share this visual project with your Confirmation Small Group** when we return to Confirmation.

We are still asking our youth to complete this project during this time. Please conduct these interviews via Facetime or phone call. Further information and details have been e-mailed to families. If you have any questions about this project, please contact me and I am more than willing to help.

**How can you help?** Some of our families are still looking for a congregation member to interview. If you are willing to have a conversation with one of our confirmation youth on the phone, please let me know. I can also provide more information to you if you need.

Although we are in times of social distancing, what a wonderful opportunity for our youth to work on this project and to have conversations with their families. For many of us, we might feel stuck at home during this time. I encourage you to think about this project, and even complete parts of it. I encourage

you to call a family member of any age (a parent, sibling, child, grandchild, etc.) to talk about God and your faith journey. I encourage you to call someone from our Grace family to talk about your stories of grace or your own journey. I encourage you to create your own Faith Family Tree and share that with others. I encourage you (if you can) to tell the people that are part of your Faith Family Tree that they have had an impact on your faith journey.

## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL & SUMMER CAMP

Have you considered sending your child to Bible camp this summer? Summer camps can serve as a wonderful opportunity for your child to grow in their faith, step out of their comfort zone and make some long-lasting friendships. We are fortunate to have multiple Bible camps around Albert Lea, including Good Earth Village, Camp Ewalu, Lutheran Lakeside and many more! Each of these camps offer a variety of different programs for all ages, including half-week or full-week programs. Summer camps focus on spending time with God in creation, worship, playing games, Bible studies and more!

Did you know that Grace will pay for part of the tuition towards a Bible camp? Grace Lutheran Church will pay for \$150 towards a full week of camp or \$75 towards a partial week of camp. All you need to do is include Grace Lutheran - Albert Lea as your home church during registration (If registering for Good Earth Village, use the codes GRACE150-2020 or GRACE75-2020). Grace also offers additional financial aid if needed - we don't want money to be the reason your child is unable to attend camp. Contact Ashley Kuhlman for more information about the different camp options your child could attend!

Mark your calendars for VBS. We will be having Vacation Bible School at Grace Lutheran Church again this year with the Good Earth Village counselors! The dates are July 27<sup>th</sup> – July 31<sup>st</sup>. More information will be available in the upcoming months.

# Parish Nurse Notes



Lori Tuchtenhagen,  
Parish Nurse  
parishnurse@gracealbertlea.org

It is important that everyone follow standard prevention practices to reduce the spread of contagious diseases.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay at home from school, work and activities if you are ill.
- Clean and disinfect frequently-touched objects and surfaces.

I find that in our complex, fast-paced world we don't have much time to reflect and recharge. Here are a few one-liners that you can carry with you throughout the day.

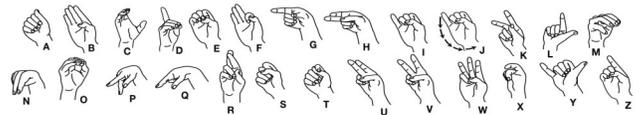
1. Faith is the ability to not panic.
2. As a child of God, prayer is kind of like calling home every day.
3. Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be bent out of shape.
4. When we get tangled up in our problems, be still. God wants us to be still so God can untangle the knot.
5. Silence is often misinterpreted, but never misquoted.
6. Laugh every day, it's like inner jogging.
7. The most important things in your home are the people.

8. Growing old is inevitable; growing up is optional.
9. There is no key to happiness. The door is always open.
10. A grudge is a heavy thing to carry.

You are in my prayers for good health,  
Lori Tuchtenhagen, Parish Nurse

## Puzzle!

Hands play a key role in the biblical accounts of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Use this sign-language alphabet to retell what happened.



Jesus' \_\_\_\_\_ were \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

to the tree. Two criminals were also crucified,

one on the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

and the other on the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus. Jesus

cried out with a loud voice, " \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
\_\_\_\_\_ "

into your \_\_\_\_\_ I commit my spirit."  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Luke 23:46) Jesus' friends \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

him from the cross to the tomb. Jesus showed

\_\_\_\_\_ his \_\_\_\_\_ to prove  
\_\_\_\_\_

he was Christ. Bring your \_\_\_\_\_ together  
\_\_\_\_\_

in \_\_\_\_\_ , and thank God for his  
\_\_\_\_\_

Son, Jesus!

Answer: hands, nailed, right, hand, left, Father, hands, carried, Thomas, hands, hands, prayer

# Church Council Minutes

**March 10, 2020**

1. Call to Order and Roll

The meeting was called to order by President Tims at 6:30 p.m.

2. Opening: Pastor Shane

Pastor Shane engaged the Council with a "story wheel" as a means to help us get to know each other better.

3. Open Forum

Concerns were raised about coffee being ready for Coffee Fellowship after the first service. Pastor Shane noted that it has been resolved.

Concerns were raised about the lighting outside of the SW exterior door. Pastor Shane noted that it has been resolved.

4. Constitution: Constitution Review Team (Barber, Hanson, and Groeneweg)

Barber reviewed revisions to the Chapter 10 By-Laws associated with the Grace Constitution. They pertained to who can call a special congregational meeting, the percentage of membership signatures needed on a petition to call a special meeting, and what would constitute a quorum.

After discussion, it was MSA (Moved/Seconded/Approved) by Tims and Groeneweg to require 25% of the congregation needed to sign a petition in order to call a special congregational meeting and 25% of the average weekly worship attendance from the previous year constituting a quorum at a special meeting.

5. Approval of Today's Agenda – Action

MSA by Munyer and Groeneweg to approve the agenda for the meeting.

6. Approval of Minutes

MSA by Munyer and Groeneweg to approve the minutes from February.

7. Budget Update: Patty Tewes.

Tewes reviewed income and expenditures for February and spending to date. Giving was strong in February and spending levels are not a concern at this point in time. Tewes noted that we were only \$2000 short in giving as it related to month spending

8. Reports

- Lead Pastor Report: Pastor Koepke
  - ◆ Funeral was conducted.
  - ◆ Pastor Shane and Deacon Tewes have been preparing music for the Synod Assembly.
- Associate Pastor Report: Pastor Gonsalves
  - ◆ Recently returned from vacation
  - ◆ Working with the Scholarship Committee to finalize awards
  - ◆ First communion preparations are underway
- Deacon's Report and Technology Update: Deacon Bob Tewes
  - ◆ Prepping technology upgrades – screen installation (kitchen and Narthex), cameras (sanctuary), computer updates, and streaming/recording capacity
- Commission & Committee Report Highlights
  - ◆ Visitation Committee – Recently held a meeting for planning purposes. Noted that the committee needs more members.
  - ◆ LEAD – Received Otto Bremer Grant of \$10,000 for the Backpack Program. Snap Fitness and the Albert Lea Lions Club also made donations.

9. Old Business

- Lenten supper: March 25<sup>th</sup> Dennis Hamberg is in charge of food for the supper. Note...cancelled due to the coronavirus.

*Continued on page 12*

# Gifts of Love

## BALL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

### In Memory Of:

Grace Zimmerman given by Bob Ball & Laura McKibben

Milt Haroldson given by Bob Ball & Laura McKibben

## BOILER/BUILDING/ROOF/FURNACE FUND

### Gifts Given By:

Dale & Dorothy Baldwin, Carroll & Mavis Hanson

## BACKPACK FOOD PROGRAMS

### In Memory Of:

Donald "Forrie" Porter given by Ross & Shelly Peterson

Les Tuftte given by Ross & Shelly Peterson

Edna Herfendal given by LuVerne Godtland

### In Honor Of:

Harriet Harne's 90th Birthday given by Ona Meyer, Dexter & Janet Henschel, Dale & Dorothy Baldwin

### Gifts Given By:

Albert Lea Lions Club, Snap Fitness, Dale & Dorothy Baldwin

## FOOD SHELF

### In Memory Of:

Dick Godtland given by Sandy Godtland

### Gift Given By:

Darin & Rebecca Passer

## LIBRARY FUND

### Gift Given By:

Darin & Rebecca Passer

## LOVE OFFERING

### In Memory Of:

Dave Palmer given by Dell & June Claussen

Jeanine Dahl given by Bruce & Diane Olson

### Gifts Given By:

Richard & Darlene Jordahl, Vince & Corrine Tims, Dr. Clayton Nelson Foundation

## MARTIN LUTHER FUND

### In Memory Of:

Jeanine Dahl (mother of Jerry (Tricia) Dahl) given by Hazel Spiering

### Gifts Given By:

Mary Circle, Darin & Rebecca Passer

## MEMORIAL FUND

### Gift Given By:

Richard & Darlene Jordahl

## MUSIC MINISTRY

### In Memory Of:

Les Tuftte given by Dorothy Michaelis

Clarice & Donald Porter given by Dorothy Michaelis

### Gift Given By:

Darin & Rebecca Passer

## PRAYER GARDEN

### In Memory Of:

Les Tuftte given by Lon & Jody Christianson

## YOUTH/EDUCATION MINISTRY

### Gift Given By:

Dale & Paula Buendorf

**PLEASE NOTE** that any additional "Gifts of Love" recorded by the church office after March 22, 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.

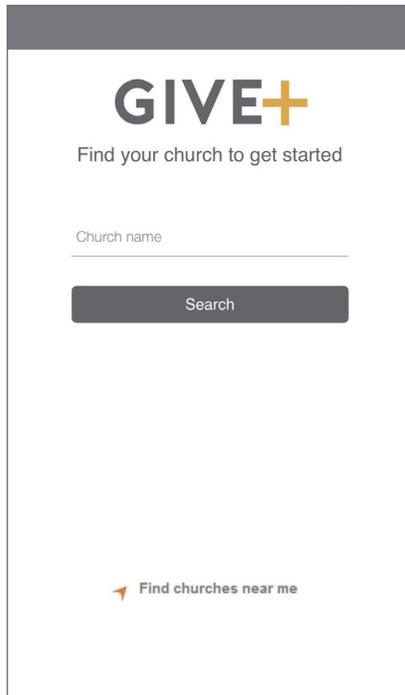




# Giving to your church is as easy as 1-2-3

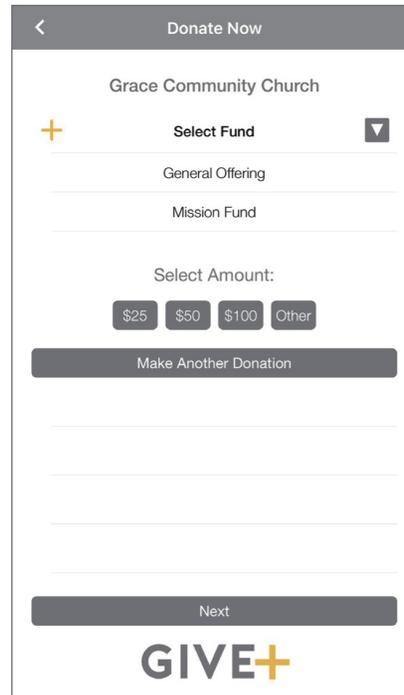
Download the FREE Give+ app from the App Store and see how easy giving can be.

## 1. Search



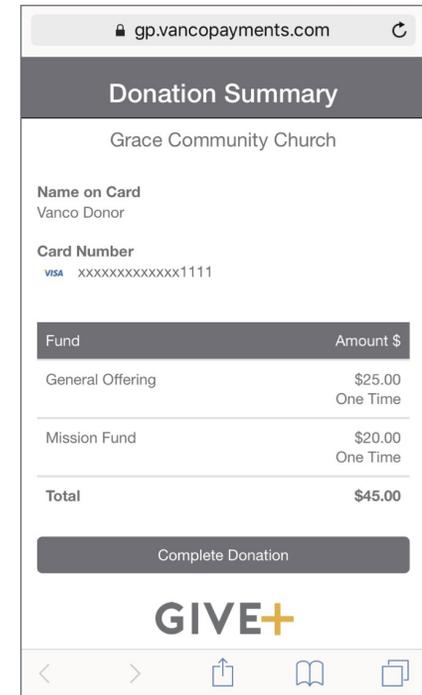
- Enter church name or tap *Find churches near me* to start your search
- Select your church
- Your selected church will be displayed as your default church
- Tap *Donate Now*

## 2. Select



- Choose a fund and a preset amount or enter another amount
- Select *Make Another Donation* to make additional donations in the same transaction
- Tap *Next* to enter your credit card information

## 3. Submit



- Review your donation summary then select *Complete Donation*

# Grace Prays

## **Prayers of Healing**

**Kay Goodmanson**

**Evie Read**

(Mother of Sarah Stay)

**Truman & Barbara Thron**

**Pat Johnson**

**Arik Matson**

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

**Graham Whitmore**

(Grandson of Greg & Pam Henderson)

## **Prayers for those Grieving**

**Family & Friends of Edna Herfendal**

**Family & Friends of Evie Toft**

(Grandmother of Nikki Schumaker)

**Family & Friends of Evie Toft**

(Grandmother of Nikki Schumaker)

**Family & Friends of Phil Bachman**

(Grandfather of Alina Bachman)

## **Prayers of Joy**

**For our healthcare workers  
and emergency responders,  
truck drivers and grocery workers.**

**The birth of Alice Schrader**

(Great-granddaughter of Alice Spilde)

*(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.)*

## **April**

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

1. Randy & Tammy Senholtz
2. Brandon & Stephanie, Konnar
3. Mike Severson, Lucas
4. Michael & Cynthia Severson
5. Lester & Diane Shaunce
6. Howard & Doris Sigurdson
7. Norris & Beulah Sigurdson
8. Terry & Shirlee Sigurdson
9. Shelly Sipple
10. David & Sally Skrlin
11. Dave & Jane Smith
12. Greg & Marsha Smith
13. Sue Smith, Amanda
14. Reverend Peter & Sandy Soli
15. Peter & Debra Solie, Cameron, Brady
16. Tom & Julie Sorenson, Drew
17. Virginia Sorenson
18. Hazel Spiering
19. Alice Spilde
20. Blake & Lynn Stadheim, Tony, Tyler
21. Cliff & Betty Stahl
22. Terry & Julie Stahl, Christopher, Tyler
23. Matt & Sarah Stay, Lucy, Samuel
24. Randy & Lynn Stay
25. Carmen Steele
26. Julie Sternhagen, Mark Zoller
27. Nicole Steven, Justice, Katelyn, Liley
28. Kim Stevens, Luke
29. Lorelei Stevens, Isaiah Apland
30. Jesse & Tara Stirling, Nora



## Caring and Sharing

**Co-Chairperson: Debby Ryan  
and Linda Anderson**

Dorothy & Dale Baldwin  
Tracey & John Ball  
Michelle & Jeremy Brue  
Roxann Brue  
Mindy & Jim Carlson  
Cheryl & Paul Citurs  
Linda Crom  
Judy & Gary Fisher  
Arless & Ron Hanna  
Kittie Hanson  
Kristine & Ken Hanson  
Cynthia & Brad Haugen  
Maureen & Bruce Haugsdal  
Karen & Michael Hendrickson  
Pat & Myron Levisen  
Cindy Nguyen  
Kathi & Rick Overocker  
Shelly & Ross Peterson  
Debby & Michael Ryan  
Sherry & Charles Seberson  
Tammy & Randy Senholtz  
Shirlee & Terry Sigurdson  
Julia & Steve Thompson  
Corrine & Vince Tims  
Julie & Paul Tlamka  
Mary Tuft  
Mary Tuohy  
Geraldine & James Veldman  
Christine & Steven Vogt  
Dawn Walk  
Karen Wolfe

**OUR THANKS** to Joyce Purdy and Sherry Seberson for serving as chairwomen for March 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!

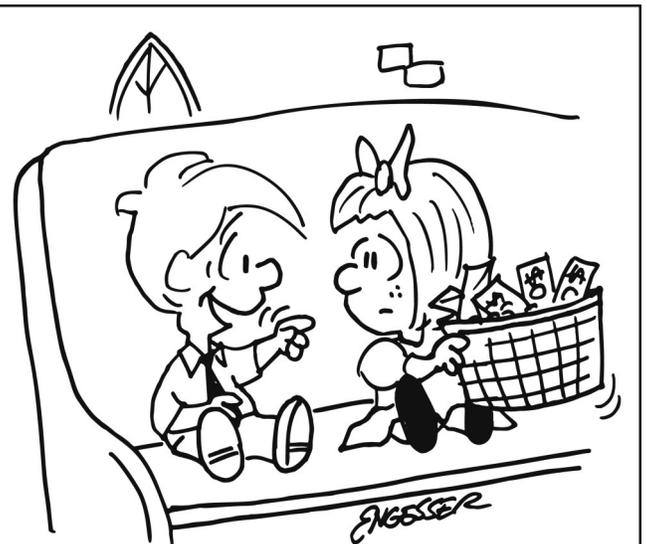
### Grace WELCA Women's Circles

**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.



"I put in a jelly bean for pastor."

# Church Council Minutes Continued

- Strategic planning – Staff have included plan priorities in their annual plans. The 2020 budget also includes funding for strategic plan priorities.
  - Put it on your calendar, 75<sup>th</sup> Celebration: October 10, 2021. A planning committee has been formed that includes Pastor Shane, Jim Munyer, and Marsha Smith.
  - Capital Campaign
    - ◆ Bathroom remodeling: Building and Grounds is waiting for plumber and architecture plans. Once they are received; bids will be sought. Asbestos removal has started.
    - ◆ Campaign Update: Schindler noted that \$1800 was collected in February, cash-on-hand amounts to \$150,700, and that \$1,061,000 has been collected in total for the campaign. He also noted that \$9,350 has been spent on the restroom project so far.
    - ◆ Set a date to Celebrate the success of the Capital Campaign: After some discussion, tentative plans include a “bathroom tissue” ribbon cutting after the restroom project is completed; with some refreshments to follow.
10. New/Other Business
- Chapel “makeover” – This strategic planning project will include the installation of carpet, securing moveable/interlocking chairs, large screen, and AC being explored.
  - Coronavirus – The Council discussed the need for hand sanitizer availability, additional disinfectant cleaning, alternative communications to shut-ins, and alternatives for our weekly worship (streaming, recording, Facebook)
  - Grace Seniors – There is a plan to rein-

state the program to include speakers and coffee fellowship.

- Freezer meals – Inspired by an Adult Forum speaker, Caring and Sharing plan to prepare and make available to foster families frozen meals when they take on a new child.

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

12. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 8:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Gary Schindler – Grace Lutheran Church Council Secretary

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## A MODERN-DAY PARABLE

In Luke 15, Jesus tells three parables about the precious being lost and, at great lengths, found again. The kingdom of heaven, he says, is like that. But most of us don't shepherd sheep and wouldn't fret over one lost coin. A child, on the other hand ...

In fall 2019, as night fell in northern Minnesota, 6-year-old Ethan and his dog wandered off. Family and police grew frantic because the area consisted of fields, woods and swamps. Authorities requested assistance.

The kingdom of heaven, Jesus might say, is like *600 volunteers* searching diligently in the dark for a child they didn't know. It's like Steve Fines who, though also a stranger to the boy, grabbed his company's pricy heat-seeking drone and worked the camera for hours, until it detected Ethan huddling with his dog, safe but cold. Yes, the kingdom of heaven — indeed God — is like people giving their all and refusing to quit until the lost one is found.



## CREATION CARE CORNER

Pollinators are in trouble. Disease, pesticides, loss of habitat, and competition from non-native plant and animal species are putting stress on many types of pollinators. Why should we care? Pollinators are a vital part of Creation! They are essential to the fertilization of almost 80 percent of flowering plants, and we depend on pollinators for nearly one-third of the food we eat.

Did you know that Minnesota has a grant program for individuals to grow pollinator-friendly plants in their yards? "Lawns to Legumes" offers workshops, planting guides, and cost-share funding for establishing native plantings that support pollinators on residential lawns. Minnesota residents who are chosen for the program can be reimbursed up to \$350 for costs associated with turning part of their yards into pollinator habitat.

The application period aimed at fall 2020 projects is open March 9 through June 2. Apply online at the Blue Thumb website.

A nearby source for a wide variety of native plants is Blazing Star Gardens of Owatonna.



Source: Wikimedia Commons

"The flowers appear on the earth,  
the time of singing has come,  
and the voice of the turtledove  
is heard in our land."

-Song of Solomon 2:12

## Grace Activities

### MEAL SUPPORT FOR THE FOSTER FAMILY PROGRAM

On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, Rachel Dressen presented information on the foster family program at the Adult Forum. One of the needs expressed was having readily-available meals for foster parents. A number of people voiced an interest in creating a team to gather periodically to create freezer meals that would be stored at Grace. Those meals would then be available when needed by foster families. A date will be set when church activities resume to develop a plan for this new endeavor. Please consider joining this planning meeting. Call Becky at 391-2770 with questions or suggestions.

### ENOUGH FOOD FOR ALL

In April, the focus will actually be on non-food items. The Ecumenical Food Pantry indicated that there was a need for toiletry items such as: shampoo, toothpaste, dish soap, bar soap, toilet paper, deodorant. Please help fill the pallet in the Narthex with these items during the month of April. Thanks for your generosity.

### A VOYAGERS TRIP MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

A trip is being planned to Chanhassen Dinner Theater to see the production of The Music Man. As in the past, we want to fill a charter bus to travel to the theater for a Saturday matinee performance on July 25<sup>th</sup>. Talk to your friends and family and make your plans to join the adventure. Depending on the response from Grace members and their family/friends, invitations may be sent to area churches at a future date. Watch for a sign-up sheet in the Narthex.

happy  
EASTER



## QUARTERS FOR WORLD HUNGER

In Pennsylvania, James Sandt started as a boy by helping on his family's farm. As an adult, he managed a large corporate farm and eventually made the dream of working for himself a reality by purchasing his own farm. In 2011 he attended a four-day educational event hosted by ELCA World Hunger, and soon after was motivated to begin a community garden with the goal of supplying fresh food to the local food banks. A small venture by Sandt and St. Peter's Lutheran Church quickly became a community effort. The garden has almost doubled in size and is now entirely funded and supported by the community. This is just one example of the way your quarters are used by ELCA World Hunger. Thank You.



**NO FAIR TRADE COFFEE**  
Until further notice



Remember your coins  
for Sunday's  
Noisy Offering

## GENEROSITY AT GRACE

### FEBRUARY 2020

February Attendance: 858

February Giving: \$64,771.80

February Expenses: \$66,947.51

Year-to-date giving vs expenses: -\$18,589.08

*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.*

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current.  
Go to  
[facebook.com/  
GraceAlbertLea](https://www.facebook.com/GraceAlbertLea)

Join us on Facebook  
for all the up-to-date  
information and happenings at  
Grace Lutheran Church.

**VOLUNTEER**  
POSSIBILITIES

**CARING & SHARING:** We still need co-chairs for **September, October and November**. The Caring & Sharing monthly co-chair sign-up sheet for 2020 is in the Narthex or call the office. **Please** consider being a co-chair for September, October or November. WELCA thanks you for giving of your time in serving our Grace community.

## Greeting from Latvia!



During the past couple weeks, Pastor Jennifer has been communicating with our sister church in Valkas-Lugazu, Latvia. We were thrilled to hear from their new pastor, Pastor Andris Reiters. I've included a portion of his email below:

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We were very surprised receive Christmas greeting and presents from you. Like as You we think and pray for You, our sister congregation every Sunday worship. I regret that but for several reason we get amazing package only at end of February. Thanks You very much for letter, thanks for lovely drawings, specially for Prayer Square and donation as bank check.

Yes Christmas time was very peacefully and filled with blessing of Christ's live. We had few good concerts in church and worships. Of course our Kindergarten children prepare most lovely performance. Now we are in Lent period and are in hope for everyone in the mind, heart and soul get experience of our Lord Crist's resurrection wonder.

Thanks, from all Valkas-Lugazu congregation!

Peace with you,

Andris Reiters

Pastor of Valka-Lugazu, Strenchi and Vijciems churches

Chaplain of Strenchi mental health hospital

When Grace decided to suspend all in-person worship and activites, I reached out again to Pastor Reiters to ask for their prayers during this uncertain time. This is his response:

Since sunday for month we stop regular worship in Latvia as well. In our country registrered half a hundred cases, but we will to protect people. Schools have been shut down, international flights, coach are stopped.

Many churches starting Facebook Live Video for worship translation, but I not choose yet how help and assist members stay with God.

Sure we have to keep you in our prayers brothers and sisters in Christ in Albert Lea are spared and that you too find comfort in God's promises during this challenging time.

Peace,

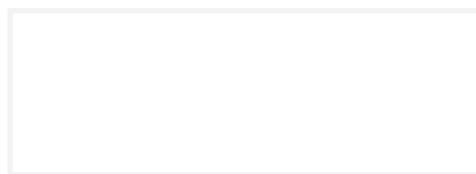
Pastor Andris

Please, keep our brothers and sisters in Christ in Latvia and around the world in your prayers.

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## Weekly Worship Services and Holy Week

Join us for live stream worship on Sunday  
mornings at 9:00 am on  
[facebook.com/GraceAlbertLea](https://www.facebook.com/GraceAlbertLea)

This worship will be saved so you can watch it later too!

Past worship services can be found on our website at  
[gracealbertlea.org](http://gracealbertlea.org)

Holy week worships will be available online.