



Grace Gazette

March 2019

Grace is a Christian Family Welcoming all people to actively live God's Word and strengthen their faith.

Seasons of the Church Year: Lent

Lent is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday. Lent comes from the Anglo Saxon word *lencten*, which means "spring." The forty days represents the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, enduring the temptation of Satan and preparing to begin his ministry.

Lent is a time of repentance, fasting and preparation for the coming of Easter. It is a time of self-examination and reflection. In the early church, Lent was a time to prepare new converts for baptism. Today, Christians focus on their relationship with God, often choosing to give up something or to volunteer and give of themselves for others.

Sundays in Lent are not counted in the forty days because each Sunday represents a "mini-Easter" and the reverent spirit of Lent is tempered with joyful anticipation of the Resurrection. (from <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/what-is-lent-and-why-does-it-last-forty-days>)

Here at Grace, there are additional worship services during the season of Lent. Along with our usual Sunday morning worship services at 8am and 10:30am, we gather on Wednesday evenings for worship at 7pm, with an opportunity to share supper beforehand at 6pm (see details elsewhere in this newsletter). This year, our Wednesday evening worship services have a courtroom setting, as we explore cases that could have been brought against various people around Jesus.

Many Christians choose to observe Lent by adding a different spiritual practice to their daily or weekly routine. Spiritual practices are activities that help us to grow in our faith. Prayer, bible or devotional reading, charitable giving, and fasting are some of the traditional ones. Fasting is giving something up – a certain kind of food or drink, TV, social media, shopping, video games, dinner out, gossip – anything that is a sacrifice for you, something you will miss.

Some more recent spiritual practices include setting aside one item for the food pantry every day during Lent, or one item from your closet to donate. Acts of kindness, cards or phone calls to the important people in your life, volunteering, visiting with those who are lonely or isolated, connecting with neighbors. Anything that can help turn your attention to your relationship with God and others can be a spiritual practice.

Whether you choose to add a new spiritual practice to these 40 days of Lent or not, remember Lent is a time of growing in our relationship with God, as we focus on Jesus' journey toward the cross.

Pastor Michelle

Worship on Wednesdays in Lent

This year, for our Wednesday evening worship services during Lent, we're using a series called "Convicted." This series of messages takes place in a courtroom setting, where the prosecuting and defense attorneys argue their cases before you, the jury. Step into the courtroom each week on Wednesday evenings in Lent. Each week puts a different biblical person from the story of Christ's passion and death on trial, accused of an actual crime.

Ash Wednesday – March 6th

We gather for worship at 7pm, with a light soup supper at 6pm. Worship will include imposition of ashes and holy communion, along with the first in our "Convicted" Lent series. On Ash Wednesday, we will look at the case against Jesus' disciples on the charge of defamation of character against the woman who anointed Jesus.



On the following Wednesdays in Lent, we will consider these cases:

March 13th – the case against Jesus' disciples on the charge of dereliction of duty

March 20th – the case against Judas on the charge of treason

March 27th – the case against Peter on the charge of perjury

April 3rd – the case against Pontius Pilate on the charge of obstruction of justice

April 10th – the case against Barabbas on the charge of rebellion

Synod Assembly

May 17-18, 2019 Red Lion Paper Valley Hotel and Convention Center in Appleton, WI

Every year pastors and church members meet to make decisions on behalf of the 126 congregations in the East-Central Synod of Wisconsin, to which Grace Lutheran Church belongs. (A synod is the ELCA churches within a geographic region of the US. There are 65 synods in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).)

Bible study, thought provoking speakers, worship, entertainment, and fellowship are all included as important parts of the Assembly. Bishop Jerry Mansholt will preside and run the business meeting of the Assembly. The theme this year is *We are Church for the Sake of the World*.

Every congregation is invited to send two voting members in addition to the pastor. If you are interested in attending synod assembly, contact Pastor Michelle at 715-423-2330 or MLNick93@gmail.com by March 25th.

Stephen Ministry

This month Grace will be starting its 6th year of Stephen Ministry. Over the past 5 years we have ministered to 17 individuals who were facing some kind of difficulty in their lives. Stephen Ministers are trained to provide one on one confidential Christian care to people in need. They also provide communion to those people that are unable to attend church. Please keep the Stephen Ministry in your prayers. If you are in need of confidential care and support, contact Pastor Michelle.



Lenten Suppers

Our first Lenten Supper is happening on Ash Wednesday, March 6th at 6:00 pm. Come and take time to break bread together before our Wednesday Lenten worship. This year we are choosing to offer some easy, favorite foods to give you a change of pace. Here is a preview of our Lenten Suppers menu:

March 6 = Traditional Soup Supper

March 13 = Pizza

March 20 = Sloppy Joes and Mac & Cheese

March 27 = Spring Break. No Supper

April 3 = Baked Potato Bar

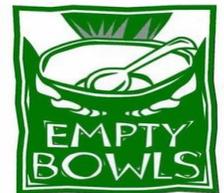
April 10 = Chili Dump

We will still need plenty of volunteers and food providers to help make these suppers happen. Please look for the sign-up sheets in the Welcome Center to see what you can do, make or bring.



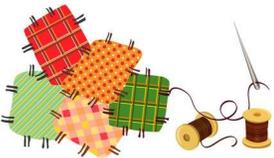
Attend Empty Bowls this Saturday March 2, 2019 from 11am-2pm at First English

Lutheran Church – 440 Garfield Street, WR. Grace is partnering with First English to provide this event which raises funds for multiple organizations addressing hunger needs in our community. For your \$10 donation, you will receive a meal of soup, bread, beverage and homemade cookies. In addition, you will take home a bowl handcrafted by a local potter. More than 50 raffle baskets are available, please plan to purchase tickets to increase the support.



Attention all crafters!

We have scheduled another UFO weekend and we hope you can join us! UFO stands for Un-Finished Objects and includes anything you are working on; quilting, card making, scrapbooking, knitting, jewelry creations, painting, etc. If you like spending time with other crafters who also have unfinished projects, please join us on March 15-16 in the Fellowship Hall at church. Come for a few hours or for a whole day. If you plan on attending or need more details, please contact Jana Nelson so we know how many to plan for at jana.nelson@charter.net or call 715-421-2544.



Think Easter Flowers!---

Even though it is cold and snowy outside, we can start thinking about spring flowers! Watch for the offering envelopes in the Welcome Center, to purchase Easter flowers in memory of or in honor of a loved one, to be displayed at our Easter services on 4/21/19.



SAVE THE DATE!

Warmer weather is coming before we know it...and so is ...

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL!

Save the date and tell your friends!

July 30, 31 and August 1

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

More details to come soon.



The Community Outreach Program of the Alzheimer's Association of Greater Wisconsin will be coming to Grace Lutheran Church as part of continuing education for the Stephen Ministers. We are inviting all members of Grace, their families, or friends to learn about the 10 signs of Alzheimer's, memory loss, dementia, and the difference between that and normal age-related memory changes.

The presentation will be given by JoAnne Janikowski from the Greater Wisconsin Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association on Tuesday, March 5 at 6:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. Contact Dorothy Freiman at 715.424.1951 with any questions.

Mark your calendars for another presentation on the first Tuesday of April. On April 2 Dr. Richelle Hoekstra-Anderson, a clinical psychologist and a certified life coach will speak to us about the importance of taking care of ourselves. She will help us to see how when we care for ourselves, we can better care for others. The meeting will be in the Fellowship Hall at 6:00pm. This is open to all the members of Grace, their family and friends-anyone that may be interested in this topic.

Grace is participating in the Family's "Help for the Homeless" hygiene drive which runs until Sunday, March 10th. There is a collection box located in the gathering center. Items needed are cleaning supplies, laundry soap, garbage bags, hair care, paper products – toilet tissue, paper towels, and feminine care; baby care – diapers, pull ups sizes 4-6, and wipes; personal care – bar soap, unscented deodorant, and razors and soft toothbrushes and toothpaste.



South Wood

SWEPS

Emerging Pantry Shelf

"Help for the Homeless" is a collection drive for hygiene and cleaning products – items not available to residents participating in Food Share programs. Donations stay in the communities where they are collected. In Wisconsin Rapids donations go to The Family Center, and SWEPS.

Want a break from the winter weather?

Need a night of laughs to raise your spirits?

Have we got the show for you!

Come see **The One That Got Away** performed by the Grace Players on **Thursday, March 7th through Sunday, March 10th**. A night of food, fun and fellowship awaits you! **Our last ticket sale is this Sunday, March 3rd, after both services** (tickets will still be available in the church office and at the door up until the performance, if there are any available).

Just to update you...**Saturday's performance is sold out...**but there are still many tickets left for the two dessert shows, Thursday and Sunday, and the other dinner show, Friday. Forget the cold and snow for a couple of hours and join us fishing 'Up North'!



Dear Church,

This morning at worship in the Churchwide Office we sang;

God, when human bonds are broken, and we lack the love or skill
To restore the hope of healing, give us grace and make us still...
Give us faith to be more faithful, give us hope to be more true,
Give us love to go on learning: God, encourage and renew. (ELW 603)

These words speak to many aspects of our current world. Today they resonate especially with our continuing prayers for our full communion partner, The United Methodist Church (UMC), and, as they call themselves, for all “the people called Methodists.”

Yesterday the 2019 General Conference, the UMC’s highest legislative body, voted to affirm the church’s current prohibitions of “ordaining LGBTQ clergy and officiating at or hosting same-sex marriage.” (You can read about this decision at <https://www.umnews.org>.) This special General Conference had been called for this issue only; in the end, delegates turned away from a plan recommended by their Council of Bishops, which allowed for diversity in local practice, to embrace instead this “Traditional Plan.”

Many of you today are asking the good Lutheran question, “What does this mean?” The implications of the decisions of the General Conference are not yet fully apparent: the Judicial Council must review controversial provisions later this year, and in any case the rippling consequences for ecclesial life will take much longer to work themselves out. Yet it seems clear that the conclusion of this process has not brought the greater unity for which so many longed.

What we can say with certainty is that as the UMC takes its next steps, we in the ELCA will continue to walk with our full communion partner. We treasure the joyful memories of the Churchwide Assembly in 2009, where we voted unanimously to enter this relationship, and we are grateful also for the common witness, deepened friendships, and shared ministries which have been the fruits of this decision. This relationship, and our commitment, have become woven into who we are as this church. Our life together as churches is a shared life together in Christ.

We remember also that the same 2009 Assembly decided to open the way for those in same-gender relationships to serve as pastors. This week, as we watched the impassioned debates on the plenary floor in St. Louis, we recognized that these costly struggles are familiar from our own recent history, and acknowledge that some amongst us have experienced re-traumatization. In our present experience also, we have not fully grown into the commitments we have made. Yet, though a controversial decision at the time, our 2009 action has brought strength and blessings for our life and mission beyond what we could have imagined a decade ago. This church treasures the faithful ministries of those rostered leaders who help us witness to God’s love and invitation for all people. Their ministries are integral to who we are as this church.

I ask this church, then, to continue by the side of the UMC, exchanging gifts and sharing burdens. In particular, we pray for them in their continued efforts faithfully to be church in the contexts we share. As we pray for them, we pray also for this church: may we be faithful to the calling to which we have been called, willing to confess our shortcomings and to trust in the healing, challenge and surprise of the Spirit of God, who calls us always forward.

In Christ,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton

Presiding Bishop

Thrivent Choice® makes a meaningful impact

Think of the impact you—along with other eligible Thrivent members—can help make by directing Choice Dollars to Grace Lutheran Church. The outreach funding we receive from Thrivent Financial through this program can help us fund important ministries in 2019. Last year, you designated more than \$3,300.00 to Grace with your Thrivent choice dollars. If you have not made your choice dollars' destination for 2018, you have until **March 31, 2019** to do so.



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Directing Choice Dollars is easy. Simply go to Thrivent.com/thriventchoice to learn more and find program terms and conditions. Or call 800-847-4836 and say "Thrivent Choice" after the prompt. Together, we can do even more to help strengthen our community and change lives.

Connecting with Grace

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Joanne Wayne: Ministry Coordinator
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Kevin Cushman: Youth Ministries
Email: theyouthguy@yahoo.com

Susan Jacobson: Administrative Assistant
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Every week the Sunday service is recorded. The recording is available on the public access channel, Charter channel 985 (WRCM) and Solarus channel 3) and can be viewed on Saturday at 8:00 AM and continuing on Sunday at Noon. The service is also available on YouTube (go to YouTube.com and type in GLCWR on their search and select the date of the service you want to watch.) Contact the office for more information.

1 Cor. 12:16

"And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body' that would not make it any less a part of the body." The Lord has called each of us individually and given each of us unique gifts. He has made our whole lives holy in our Baptism and has called us to a life together in the Church, His body. You are a part of that body, and that body needs you and the gifts the Lord has given you. This is your holy calling from the Lord.
