# grace notes

The May Newsletter of Grace Lutheran Church

# We're Almost at the Finish Line!

Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us. Hebrews 12:1

It's hard to believe another ministry year at Grace is rapidly coming to a close! Lent is over and we are deep into our 7 week Easter RESTART celebration. Confirmation is just a few weeks away, and there are a few more SONday School sessions left. Like marathon runners coming near the finish line, it's time for a last burst of speed so we can finish well.

We invite you to consider how you might gear up and sprint in these next couple of weeks:

- Feed My Starving Children Packing Event on Thursday, May 14th at 6 pm at the FMSC building in Coon Rapids to help starving children throughout our world. What better way to train yourself in your serving ability than taking two hours out of your evening to make a difference in the world.
- Just 1 More 5K Race on Saturday, May 17th at Bunker Hills Park to help support World Wide Village's CITY ON A HILL PROJECT. The reason for the race is simple: all money raised will go toward building a medical clinic to serve the people in Williamson, Haiti. It doesn't matter if you are a runner or a walker. There's a spot for you! If you're busy that day, you can also support someone by pledging a dollar amount for each kilometer run! Once again, the Just 1 More 5K is a great opportunity for you to sharpen your serving habit as you work on your health.
- Last Day of SONday School Celebration on Saturday, May 17 and Sunday, May 18. We will cheer the 5th graders who will graduate and then go Continued on Page 2

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#### We're Almost at the Finish Line - cont'. from pg 1

to the Fellowship Hall for our Annual Jeopardy Tournament. Study Sheets will be sent home in May so every student will have the opportunity to be a winner!

So, we might be close to this year's ministry finish line, but there's still a lot of opportunity to put on the last burst of speed. Let's get going!





Add some **ADVENTURE** to your summer and join us for a women's BEGINNER Boundary Water Canoe Trip July 29 – August 2. No prior camping or wilderness experience needed, and women of all ages from 18 to 115 years young are welcome to join us.

This is a 'beginner' trip, so we will spend two nights at a fully modern cabin (running water and all) and three days/two nights on the trial. So whether you've portaged a million miles, or never sat in a canoe – this trip is for YOU! The cost will be determined in near future, depending on the number of participants. Trip plans need to be secured prior to June 1<sup>st</sup> and spots are limited.

So jump on board for this ADVENTURE – it will be a physical and spiritual adventure for sure! And one amazing adventure you won't regret or forget!

For more information, please contact Sonja Birkeland 651 442-9501 or sonjathebirk@gmail.com (I'm faster at email)

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# G.R.A.M.P.S.

Grace's Resourceful Active Men Performing Service A.K.A The Property Team

Hello, I am publicly trying out our new name for the first time, how do you like it? I have been using this name privately for several months, and decided it was time to go public with it.

Normally I would include my report with the "Graceful Seniors" article, however lately we have been joined by Men, Women and Youth who are not members of the "Graceful Seniors" group. This is a trend I am very pleased to see and hope it continues. Yes, I will come up with a new acronym when that happens.

Our team has been very busy behind the scenes performing many maintenance tasks. To list a few:

- Built, painted and installed new poles for the sidewalk lights and helped install the lights.
- Painted the back of the portables and other areas of the church
- Installed film on the windows of the portables
- Installed spot lights in the Fellowship Hall.
- Modified the pew pockets. Now the welcome envelopes fit.
- Stained, the daycare deck.
- Replaced broken kitchen faucet.
- Replaced TV monitor in room 104.
- Installed a security light between the main building and the portables.
- Built and installed risers for the choir (one man alone).\*
- Replaced old broken and sagging ceiling tiles in daycare.\*

\*These last two tasks deserve special notice.

A big thank you to Dean Keller, who basically single handedly built and installed the choir risers.

Seven men and one youth spent two full Saturdays to remove old ceiling tile and install new tiles in both daycare rooms. This project has been on the to do list since Karen Erickson was the Church Administrator, but was always on hold due to lack of funds. Thanks to the "Free 2 B" campaign, this task has finally been completed. A big thank you also goes to Bob Shields and his family for the delicious Chicken and Rib dinner they served this crew on the final day of this project.

We are continually looking for new members to join our team. We would especially like to see more of our younger members join us, us older men are slowing down. We usually meet for work and fellowship on the third Thursday of each month, however when the need occurs we do work on projects at other times including Saturdays. If you are able to join us, your help will be greatly appreciated. You can contact Kris Miller at church or e-mail me at aldenandjudy@comcast.net.

Your friend in Christ

Alden Riley



# Senior Moments

According to the Grace Lutheran roster, there are 88 senior members at the present time.

Last month we told you about the Ad Hoc committee of Graceful Senior men initiating efforts to resurrect the original steel cross that stood over the first Grace Lutheran Church from 1967 to 2014. It

was removed in 2014 due to roof repairs. The committee feels it has too much history to be relegated to a scrap heap. The cross is approximately 9 feet by 6 feet.

The committee has determined the most appropriate place for location of the cross, as well as the metal plaque signifying its historical significance. The Graceful Seniors have stepped forward with fund raising for the expenditures associated with the restoring the cross, plaque, cement, etc. Any monetary assistance other Grace members could provide would be greatly appreciated. Please write a check to Grace Lutheran and on the memo line indicate it is for the "cross fund". Such a donation will be included on your giving statement for 2015. Thank you in advance for your donations.

If we are unable to raise the necessary funds in this manner, the committee will apply to Thrivent for additional monetary support.

On the third Tuesday of each month, Pastor Gene Heglund leads the "breakfast" seniors in a Biblically-related study at the Farmstead in Andover. The current charge for a delicious breakfast buffet served by the Farmstead staff is \$7.00. The meeting begins at 8:30 and is usually completed by 9:45 (because the seniors have other commitments!). Reservations need to be made for the breakfast and there is a calling committee who does this each month. If anyone is interested in joining, please contact Kris at the church office and she will follow through. We have completed the study of Proverbs and are on to other studies.

If you are a senior who has not been contacted by the church office and would like to know more about programs for seniors, call Kris Miller at Grace's office and someone will contact you.

### What is God Up to at Grace?

#### Pastor Mark's Remarks

Recently I came across an article from *The Lutheran* that spoke deeply to a growing concern I've had in my heart. Entitled: *Create Neighborhood Trust*, the author shared his church's journey of getting more in sync with the Spirit's work beyond their walls. Here's some of what he shared:

- Jennifer and her seventh-grade daughter, Maria, attend a congregation's confirmation ministry for the first time. The family had no church home, but Jennifer wanted her daughter to be part of a community that would show her love, care and support.
- Jim, a guidance counselor at a large suburban high school is working with a congregation to provide much needed career mentors for students who may fall through the cracks after graduating.
- Rosa, a principal, not only encourages members of a church to come to the elementary school library to help students with homework, but asked other local principals to do the same. Not interested in church herself, she nonetheless has invited members of this same church to offer a Bible Study for parents and families in the school building.

These examples of trusting partnerships are happening, but are coming about in a way that may be counter-intuitive to many of us. <u>Authentic relationships involve mutual</u> <u>trust and dying to our own agendas.</u>

Christian congregations, which for decades have been the trusted center of communities, have in many cases become disconnected from their neighbors. Some congregations are seen as self-serving, judgmental and unsafe places. There is a good reason for this skepticism. Instead of unconditionally loving their neighbors, they have looked at them primarily as a way to bolster the church's membership.

In a time of numerical decline in congregations across denominations and the country, it's tempting to think of the

neighborhood around the church as merely a resource to be tapped. So we advertise programs, exude hospitality, jazz up our worship and more, all in an attempt to get the neighbors into our building.

We all want to dodge the "congregation-in-decline" label

and can become frantic in our efforts to avoid it. With good

Intentions, we pour increasing amounts of energy into improving our worship attendance numbers, but often don't see the intended results.

As long as filling pews on a Sunday morning is our motivation, our neighborhood will rightly perceive the church as self-serving, and be less likely to trust us. Whether we mean to or not, the message our neighbors hear is: "We don't really care about you, we just want you to fill our building (as well as our offering plate)."

### Excerpts from - Create Neighborhood Trust by Rob Moss, The Lutheran, April 2015, pg. 36,37

One of the continuing themes we've heard through our

year's emphasis: "We are Blessed to Be a Blessing" is the work of God's Spirit in the world. Most recently in our study in the Book of Acts, we've heard stories about how the Spirit is far ahead of the apostles in transforming lives with God's Easter Restart of new creation. Time after time it's the same thing: the disciples have to run hard to catch up with what God is already doing in the lives of all kinds of people, in all kinds of places.

The questions I'm wondering about are:

"Is God doing the same thing today? And if so, is he is asking us to work

differently in the ways in which we reach out to places closest to our doors? Instead of waiting for our neighbors to come to us, could it be he's asking us to simply go out and build relationships of trust, understanding, and respect. Do you think if we do this, we might see how God is already there working in their lives? Could we even dare to think that by reaching out to our neighbors, we might experience something new about God! Good questions, right!

If any of these questions and thoughts resonate inside you, I would welcome some more conversations. I've been praying about some next steps we might take in order to rebuild and grow our relationships with our neighborhood. I'm not sure about it all, but I sure could use some prayer and help. If you're feeling the Spirit's nudge about this, give me a call or email me. (markh@graceandover.org)

In the meantime, may the Spirit continue his new creation in us!

#### Pastor Mark

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### 2015 Youth Mission Teams Fundraising News

We have 23 youth who need to raise funds so that they can serve in Washington DC and Milwaukee, WI this summer. Check out how you can support their mission to be the hands and feet of Jesus:

#### Need some help with Spring Cleaning?

Sign up on the blue sheets or contact Tom Baker to request help for your spring home projects. This can include anything from yard work to garage cleaning, washing windows, or even providing childcare so that you can get your home projects done. We will match you up with one (or more) of our youth team members, and they will contact you concerning the details of what you need done and when. Sign up on the blue sheets or leave Tom a message at 763-421-6520 (ext. 123).

#### Miles To Go Sponsorship

You can support our team by pledging one of our 15 youth and 3 adults who are going to Washington DC in July or one of our 8 youth and 2 adults who are going to Milwaukee. The first two weekends of May, we will be gathering support from our congregation. Our youth will be in the narthex to talk with you and to give you the opportunity to support them through prayer, and financially.

#### A great year in Dojo!

We have had a great leadership team of students and adults who served faithfully all year long and have done an outstanding job planning and running our weekly meetings for high school students. Great work, SaLT (Servant Leadership Team)! We will start the Summer Dojo on Wednesday, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-8:00. The Summer Dojo is a space for High School AND Middle School students to hang out together on Wednesday nights all summer long.

#### Garage Sale

As you begin your spring cleaning, don't forget to put aside some items for the Grace Garage Sale to be held June 11th – 13th. This year's sale will benefit our Washington DC and Milwaukee Mission Teams and the children and youth who are going to Luther Point Bible Camp in July.

Beginning on Monday, May 18th, we will be accepting clothing and household items in Portable #1 (the portable closest to the church building). Items can be dropped off during normal, weekday business hours, and on Saturday and Sunday from 9:30-noon. Please make sure all items are clean and in good condition.

We would appreciate NOT receiving any of the following items as they are hard to sell and are expensive to dispose of: No computers, monitors, printers, TV's, appliances, electronics, mattresses, or exercise equipment. All furniture donations must be in good condition and must be "approved for sale" before you leave it at the church. You may contact Tom Baker (tomb@graceandover.org) concerning questions on items, or to arrange pick up of bulky items after May 31st.

#### Key Dates for Confirmation

We have 30 students being confirmed this May! Here are key dates to mark on your calendar. Please pray for these students as they prepare to join the adult membership of the Grace Community.

April 27<sup>th</sup> – May 11<sup>th</sup> Confirmation Interviews. Individual students will meet with a Minister, leader or Pastor to discuss their readiness for Confirmation. May 16<sup>th</sup> – Rehearsal and Banquet: 6:00pm. May 18<sup>th</sup> – Confirmation Service at 2:00pm.

#### Grace Lutheran Church Summer Musical Camp

Monday, August 3 - Sunday, August 9

What is Musical Camp? Musical camp is a seven day exploration of music, art, drama, Bible, and fun, as we learn and develop a musical from the "inside out". Children and Youth will learn drama, music, choreography, and prepare sets and props.

Nic at Night is a play within a play that tells the story of Nicodemus, as we learn to seek Jesus, believe, and live for Him!

#### Schedule:

- Audition: June 16 & 17 at 12:45 pm after VBS.
- Pre-Camp Rehearsal: Mon. July 20 from 2-3:30 pm.
- Music Camp Schedule: M-F 9-12:30 p.m.
- Our field trip will be on Wed. which will be an extended day.
- Dress Rehearsal and Awards Sat. Aug 8, 9:30-11:30 am
- The musical will be presented in worship on Sat. Aug. 8 at 5 p.m. and Sun. Aug.9 at 8:30 and 10 a.m.

Registrations are available now with more information.





# May's News

SONday School

SONday School will end this spring on May 16/17. Thank you to all the teachers, helpers, food team, greeters, parents, and kids for a fantastic year where we have experienced God's Great Goodness first hand.

Grades 1-5 will have our annual Jeopardy tournament on the last Sunday, May 17. Study worksheets will go home in the beginning of May. The winner, each year, has not necessarily



been the 5<sup>th</sup> Graders. First and second graders have been contenders each year!

5<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation on May 16 and 17! We would like to recognize and celebrate our 5<sup>th</sup> Graders as they move from SONday School/Rockin' Kids Bible Club to Catechism. The 5<sup>th</sup> Graders attending on Saturday night will begin in worship as they normally would and come forward when it is time. Sunday morning 5<sup>th</sup> Graders will begin in their classrooms as they normally would. All 5<sup>th</sup> Grade children from SONday School and Rockin' Kids Bible Club are invited to be a part of this moment in worship.

#### Summer nursery

Nursery, this summer, will be offered at all services, 5pm on Saturday, 8:30 and 10am on Sunday. We have a fantastic group of volunteers who have served so faithfully all school year. Please show your appreciation of our volunteers, by signing up to help in the nursery. If families could sign up for one worship service, what a blessing that would be! To be a blessing, sign up on the blue sheets, or the Children's Ministry Bulletin Board



Baptism is an important step in the life of a family. A Baptism Workshop will be offered. for parents who would like to have their child baptized here at Grace, on Saturday, July 11, at 9 a.m. During the workshop, you will have an opportunity to explore what Baptism means for you and your child, as your family takes this step in your faith journey. We will share with you, insights on raising a child who knows and loves God. Please contact Monica Allen at monicaa@graceandover.org or the church office to sign up for the workshop.

#### Children's Summer Worship Bible Time

While we enjoy the sunny days of summer, it is also an opportunity to worship with the children of Grace. Children will be in worship beginning May 24/25. For the Sunday morning services at 8:30 and 10 a.m., we offer *Summer Bible Time. Our theme for the summer is "Where is God".* Children will be in church with their families, come forward for the Children's Message with the pastors, and then they will be dismissed for a lesson in the Fellowship Hall. Children will return to worship after the Sermon. See Monica Allen, monicaa@graceandover.org or Kim DeVries kimd@graceandover.org if you have questions. There will be no Summer Bible Time on Memorial and Labor Day weekends.



VBS June 15th–19th, 9:30am –Noon. Ages 3- 5<sup>th</sup> grade (completed)

Get ready to travel on a life-changing adventure that leads kids in search of a love that lasts forever!

At Bible Blast to the Past, kids will participate in the large group excitement of Blast to the Past Bash, experience God's Word at Timeless Truth Tent, discover ancient arts and facts through crafts

at Discovery Ruins, and enjoy snacks and games at Backtrack Bazaar. There's even a place for the littlest explorers at Playtime Pasture!

Cost is only \$25.00 per child for the entire week, and includes a T-shirt if you register by June 1<sup>st</sup>. Registration forms are available at the Welcome Center in the narthex at church, or you may register online at

We're waiting for some brave time travelers to join us in serving and having fun! Please register your child (ren) for this exciting event as soon as possible- your kids won't want to miss this adventure!!

Our *Bible Blast to the Past* Vacation Bible School needs great volunteers, and we're hoping you will help. Please help us to teach kids that God loves us *all* – no matter what!!

Here are the details:

- VBS Training Date: June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6:30-8:00 pm
- If you would like a VBS volunteer t-shirt we will need \$5.00 by June 3rd
- VBS Dates: June 15th-19th, 9:30-Noon
- Please arrive at church each morning by 8:45am for prep and devotions

## Vision Board Notes

The Grace Lutheran Vision Board met on Tuesday, March 10th, 2015 at the home of Jessie Crooks. Dennis Grabowski, Tari Yates, BreAnn Haugrud, Bernard McDowell and Alden Riley, along with Pastor Mark were present. Greg Ackerson was absent. Tami Mielke, the Golden Rule Daycare Director joined us for dinner and the first part of our meeting. Tami shared her excitement about how well the daycare is doing these days. She reported that the daycare is full, with a waiting list. She is excited about how Golden Rule and our church are working together. She thanked Grace for the work done on the ceiling tiles.

One of the areas of growth Tami and the Vision Board discussed was a possible expansion of our present program to include a Preschool. Lots of ideas were shared. We all agreed that there are exciting new possibilities for both the church and Golden Rule Daycare. We ended the first part of the meeting with the Vision Board expressing it's profound gratitude for the vision and leadership Tami has provided! We all agreed that she has done a wonderful job!

After Tami left, Pastor Mark shared his report. Some of what we discussed were: the remaining Lent Season, Holy Week and how to best welcome guests at our upcoming Easter Celebration. Furthermore, we also discussed the Free 2B Grace Celebration, our new website (thanks Jonathan Orwig and Pastor Steve!), improvements in our sound system and projectors, the Youth Director candidates, Evangelism and Outreach projects for this summer around our neighborhoods, and continued progress on projects around our church (a big THANK YOU to Alden Riley and his team!). Among projects completed are the Choir/Band risers and the work to turn room 101 into a transformed lounge for many uses in the church.

The meeting ended in a time of prayer.

### Pastor Steve

God's timing is both amazing and frustrating. Have you ever felt that way? I want to give you an update on two big projects that I have been working on this year. Both of them are coming to a grand climax this month. I say they are frustrating because I wish they would have happened sooner, but they are amazing because the timing is perfect. (Good thing I'm not in control, right?)

The first project is the hire of a full-time youth director. I stepped into youth ministry at the end of August, 2010 to come alongside Tom Baker. The past five years have been a wonderful experience for both of us, and I think the youth ministry has done well, considering the resources we've had to give it. Tom is part-time, and I have been able to give one-third of my time to youth ministry. Between the two of us, we haven't added up to one fulltime position.

We have attempted to hire a full time youth director a few times over the past five years and the timing has never worked out. Now, in the final hour, God has brought two very strong candidates to us. As I write this article we are still in the process of interviewing these two candidates and prayerfully making the decision. I hope to announce the final decision by early May.

I am very excited to add a full-time youth director position to our Children, Youth, and Family Staff. This addition will be an amazing compliment to the amazing gifts we already have in Tom Baker, Kim DeVries, and Monica Allen. I can't wait to see what God does through this team.

That leads me to the second project I have been working on: my dissertation. My prayer is that I will be able to turn in the final draft of my dissertation this month and defend it in early June. When that happens, I will finally be free to give full attention to the ministry God has called me to do at Grace. Between the fulltime youth director to take my place in youth ministry and the completion of the dissertation, it will be like someone purged the hard drive of my brain and gave me a new operating system.

I invite you to dream new dreams with me for the upcoming ministry season. Pray with me as we try to cultivate spaces in which members of our congregation will **be able to enter into God's story and God's mission for** the world, to discern what God is doing in our neighborhoods, and to join God to bring healing, wholeness, and peace to our lives: in our own heart, our families, our neighborhoods, and the world. This is what spiritual formation is all about, and I am excited to dive in with both feet!

Pastor Steve

# Notes of Thanks for The Gifts of Ministry

Thank you, thank you to the team of Grace people who prepared meals for the church staff during Holy Week. What a blessing and a gift those meals were to all of us. Delicious too! Your gift of serving meant so much to us and was greatly appreciated.

The Grace Staff

Words cannot adequately express nor can a check for any amount adequately reflect the "miracle" of this Easter season for our family, with Gene's complete recovery from Meningitis, in such a short time.

Visits to Gene in the hospital and the rehab center by Pastor Mark and Pastor Gene were so meaningful and appreciated by our entire family. Our lives have been positively impacted by what could have so easily been a tragedy.

We thank God, our pastors and church family for all of the support and caring we received during Gene's illness.

Kay and Gene Cooper

# Team Julie Kelvie McGowan Benefit



Sunday, May 31, 2015 1:00 pm- 4:00 pm **Willy McCoy's** 12450 Business Park Blvd Champlin, MN 55316

Julie McGowan, a Grace member, wife and mother from Andover was diagnosed in October 2014 with Stage 3 Breast Cancer. Funds raised will be used to help offset the costs of her aggressive medical treatment and upcoming surgeries.

For more information, or if you'd like to donate raffle or silent auction items, contact Diane at 612-419-1918 or e-mail teamjuliemcgowan@gmail.com. Donations can also be given at Wells Fargo Banks.

# Join the HABITAT Team on June 5...

Be the hands & feet of Jesus!

Your willing hands and feet (and heart) will be a blessing to others as we serve with Habitat for Humanity on Friday, June 5 at a home construction site in Fridley, MN. We hope to gather a team of 20 Grace volunteers to serve onsite from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. You do not need to be an experienced carpenter, just a willing servant, as the Habitat site supervisor will give a brief training in the morning.

Also, Grace volunteers will provide lunch for the volun-

teers on June 5. So if you prefer a spatula over a hammer, we'd appreciate your willing hands and feet (and heart) to prepare a hearty lunch for the workers. Please consider joining the Habitat team on June 5. By offering your hands & feet (and heart) while serving with Habitat, a local family will be truly blessed with a place to call home! For more information, please contact Terry Kornberg terry.kornberg@centurylink.com (763) 202-1700

# PARTNERS in SERVING...with Sand Creek Elementary School Thursday May 14!!!

Grace Volunteers will be PARTNERS IN SERVING with the staff of Sand Creek Elementary School as we pack meals together and build relationships through our Faith & Community Partnership. Please join us from 6 – 7:30 pm Thurs. May 14 at FMSC in Coon Rapids MN – it will be a fun evening of 'connecting' as we meet new friends from Sand Creek and serve together!

The Faith & Community Partnership is a collaborative effort of the Anoka-Hennepin School District and faith based organizations to raise awareness and understanding of compelling community issues and to mobilize people to help meet the basic needs of students. During this past year, our church has partnered with Sand Creek to reach out to local students and families by delivering Holiday Food Baskets, adopting families at Christmas, giving handmade quilts to children (thank you Grace Quilters), bringing snacks and encouraging notes to the school staff, etc.

Join this FUN event as we as we build our relationship with Sand Creek and become PARTNERS IN SERVING together at Feed My Starving Children on Thurs. May 14. To register: Sign-up on blue opportunity page during worship, call the church office or register online at www.fmsc.org (note that the group name is Grace Lutheran & Sand Creek School) For more information, please contact Jeannie, jeannieh@graceandover.org

## Grace Lutheran Church

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A Ministry of Grace in the heart of Andover and beyond! www.graceandover.org NON PROFIT ORG. U.S. POSTAGE PAID Anoka, MN 55303 PERMIT No. 118

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- Just 1 More 5K Race Saturday, May 16
  8:00 a.m.-9:00 a.m. Registration; 9:15 a.m. 10K run; 9:30 a.m.- 5K run & walk ; 10:15 a.m. Kids fun run 10:30 a.m. Awards Ceremony
- Blessing of the Bikes Sunday, May 17 at 12 pm Bring your bikes, motorcycles, and 3 wheelers to our Parking Lot for a special service of blessing!
- Corey Lange Ordination Saturday, May 23 at the 5 p.m. Service Celebrate with us as we ordain one of our own as Corey is now called to be a pastor in Illinois.
- Congregational Meeting—Saturday, May 30 & Sunday, May 31 after services Election of new Vision Board Members and celebrating a great year of ministry!