

JANUARY 25, 2012—FEBRUARY 7, 2012 • VOLUME 11, NO. 2

Brighter Days.....by Pastor Ken Gibson

Today is a bright, cold crisp January day. My father had a saying for such days; This is the kind of day that looks good from a window looking out.” He would always say this and smile, and then he would usually add; “Thank God you don’t have to work outside on days like today.”

That is what I am doing as I write this article. I am looking out upon the bright white landscape that is indeed beautiful here at Grace, and I am giving thanks that my call allows me to stay within the walls of this place. Or does it? Introspectively, I am looking out my window and thinking of how much I do have to be thankful for, including working indoors on such a day. I am also recalling how Chuck Varys shared last evening at PrimeTime that he would be outside all day today working; building something, sorry Chuck, I forgot what you were going to build probably because I could not get the thought of how cold that would be out of my mind.

One bright area that I am so thankful for is the reality that one day this week marked the one year anniversary of the terrible car accident that wounded our daughter Lauren. As such, it was a week to look at with joy, (no pun intended, as that is the name of our other daughter) that we have in knowing she is doing so much better. In fact, this week she actually had two job interviews and both went very well. I/we are oh so thankful for the prayers and the love, poured into them for her and for our family, as she has worked her way through recovery. She is looking brighter every day, following a very dark experience.

A further bright spot for me these days is the sense of community that we have here at Grace. I find much brightness and joy in the time shared these days on Sundays between worship. Have you seen the activity and felt the community that we have at that time? I see and feel great brightness at that time. I hear folks checking in with one another and finding out what is going on in one another’s lives. I see folks visiting and discovering how they might be able to help each other or simply share in one another’s joys. It is a bright time there in our narthex.

Yes, there is much brightness for me these days. And for this article that is where I will keep it, for there are other days that will be filled with other thoughts that will push me to a darker place, but not today. Today, I give thanks for brightness and the love I know is present in Christ and our life together as a people called to bright things, even in the dark times. So let us all look for the brightness that is our life together in Christ and our joy in Sharing God’s Grace!

CPR Class for Church Staff and Volunteers—The Spirituality Team is offering this class on Sunday **Jan. 29** from 1:00—3:00 p.m. in Grace Center. Cost is \$5.00 per person. Max. class size:10 Please sign-up at the Information Center. Contact Nancy Kreznor at 815-338-9972 if you have any questions.

2012 Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on **Jan. 29** at 12:05 p.m. and will be followed by the Ministry Matters Meeting. Copies of the Annual Report will be available on **Jan. 15** both electronically, and in hard copy at the Information Center.

WORSHIP TODAY

Sunday, January 29, 2012

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany / Lectionary 4

INTRODUCTION: In Deuteronomy God promises to raise up a prophet like Moses, who will speak for God; in Psalm 111 God shows the people the power of God's works. For the church these are ways of pointing to the unique authority people sensed in Jesus' actions and words. We encounter that authority in God's word, around which we gather, the word that trumps any lesser spirit that would claim power over us, freeing us to follow Jesus.

READINGS:

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Psalm 111

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Mark 1:21-28

Sunday, February 5, 2012

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany / Lectionary 5

INTRODUCTION: In Isaiah it is the one God who sits above the earth and numbers the stars—it is that God who strengthens the powerless. So in Jesus' healing work we see the hand of the creator God, lifting up the sick woman to health and service (diakonia). Like Simon's mother-in-law, we are lifted up to health and diakonia. Following Jesus, we strengthen the powerless; like Jesus, we seek to renew our own strength in quiet times of prayer.

READINGS:

Isaiah 40:21-31

Psalm 147:1-11, 20c

1 Corinthians 9:16-23

Mark 1:29-39

PRAYERS—Please lift up these petitions in your prayers—To become a praying member of the Friends in Prayer, please submit name and e-mail address to dklabunde@gracewoodstock.org.

World: Bishop Hanson, Bishop Wollersheim; those serving in military conflicts, Arusha Town Lutheran Parish in Tanzania (our companion parish), Sgt. Scott Bunch, serving overseas (son of Frank & Joan Bunch)

Woodstock: Pastor Ken Gibson and his family; Pastor Amanda Bergstrom and her family; Grace Staff; Grace Council

Health Concerns: Mike Bellino (son-in-law of Martha & Bill Fleck), Erin Bice (niece of Denise Klabunde), Lois Bloese, Rhonda Bobinger (friend of Martha Fleck), Deanna Bohn, Bill Botts, Karen Bremmer (friend of Pastor Ken and Jodi Gibson), Shirley Busse, Edna Clark, Evelyn Carlsen (mother of Cathy Meyer), Joe Cherella (friend of Martha & Bill Fleck), Steve Clark (son of Edna Clark), Mark Conerty (father of Jordan & Paige Conerty), Roberta Deitchler (mother of Katie Arana), Betty Fischer (mother of Connie Fischer), Connie Fischer, Patrick Fraily (friend of August and Theo Hutchens), Matt Gerloff (grandson of Bob Gerloff), Mary Guyett (sister of Doris Sunday), Darrin Hansing (nephew of Ken & Tammy Hansing), Patrice Hoover, August Hutchens, Theo Hutchens, Dwight Jensen, Chris John (friend of Bill & Lynn Nattress), Paul Judson, Betty Karsten (sister of Vern Sarbaugh), Pastor Laura Koppenhoefer (N.I.S.), Edie Marvin (niece of Ken & Gladys Renner), Tom Marvin (nephew of Ken Renner), Emil "Corky" Matula (friend of Lois Wiecek), Olivia McMahon, Kathy Nordin, Gloria Ogle, Alice Pate, Charlotte Petersdorf (mother of Gladys Renner), Hazel Powell, Shawn Rank (son of Bert & Carol Rank), Wayne Reckamp (husband of Monica Reckamp and co-worker Nora Combs), Russ Reed, Jeff Roberts, Joan Russell (mother of Sheri Conover), Stanley Russell (father of Sheri Conover), Stephanie Sarto (friend of Paul Lockwood), Gladys Smart (mother of Deborah Evanoff), Margaret Stawicki (mother of Nan Goerlitz), Ken Swan, Tom Stone (brother Kathy Stone), Alan Swanson (friend of Joe Evanoff), Carol Thompson (daughter of Marge Dierksen), Josh Tillman, Janice Torres (mother of Dee Brown), Carrie Vought (sister of Jane Berlin), Eileen White, Lois Wiecek, Richard Young (nephew of Marge Birk), Ruth Zirves

If you wish to add a prayer request for this newsletter, please call the church office at 815-338-0554. Your prayer concern will run for one week and may be renewed. Submissions to the *Friends in Prayer* e-mail and phone teams may also be submitted by telephone to the church office or by e-mail to Gracewoodstock.org. Due to confidentiality laws, hospitals no longer notify churches or pastors when a

Beloved Community.....by Pastor Amanda Bergstrom

This past Monday morning, I enjoyed the opportunity to gather with people of faith from across McHenry County for FaithBridge's Interfaith Prayer Breakfast to honor Martin Luther King, Jr. As we gathered for prayer and song, scripture, and a keynote speaker, I was amazed by the beauty and diversity of faith traditions represented that day. A Muslim student chanted from the Qur'an, a rabbi offered words of welcome, a man played an honor song on the American Indian Flute, a priest led us in a Hindu prayer, women led us in songs of praise, a chaplain read verses from 1 John, one of our neighbors from the Blue Lotus Temple led us in a Buddhist prayer and meditation, and our guest speaker urged us to step outside our boxes and work together and live into an interfaith community.

When we engage in interfaith dialogue, prayer, or community efforts the challenges of living in an interfaith community often reflect some of the same challenges of being a part of an individual faith community. How do we honor the voices, beliefs, and values of each participant? How do we stay focused on what really matters? How do we make decisions as a community, for the community?

Each time we gather as a community here in this place, whether in worship, at PrimeTime, around last week's delicious Turkey Dinner, at the bedside of the sick, the shelter for the homeless, or in committee, council, or congregational meetings, we gather as a people of faith who yearn to see Christ in our neighbors. We seek to be a loving community and a welcoming place for all of our families, friends, acquaintances, enemies, and strangers, no matter how challenging that may be at times.

King's life, writings, speeches, and sermons offer great insight into our baptismal call as sisters and brothers in Christ. King wrote of life in community that, "We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly." Indeed, as beloved children of God we are called to live among God's faithful people (page 228 in our hymnals), and be a part of this interconnected web. And yes, this is our call—to go about the challenging work of serving with one another, of finding a way to honor the voices, beliefs, and values of each other, and stay focused on decisions for the love of all of God's beloved children.

Martin Luther King, Jr. "Letter from Birmingham City Jail." A Testament of Hope: the Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr. Ed. James Melvin. Washington. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991. 289-302.



Upcoming Choir Opportunities—Join the choir for Transfiguration (Feb. 19 both morning services) and/or the annual WACM Concert (Feb. 26 afternoon rehearsal/evening concert). Rehearsals are Wednesdays beginning this week for WACM from 7:00 - 7:45 p.m. and for Transfiguration 7:45 - 8:15 p.m. Contact Ron or any choir member for more information or just come and discover the joy (and fun) of singing in a choir. Young voices are also encouraged to join the appropriate children's choir to sing at these events. Contact Tammy Baier and/or Larry Lagerhausen.

Recent Additions to the Grace Library—BAPTISM, Paul Engle series editor. The what, who, when, why of baptism defended and critiqued from Baptists, Lutheran, Reformed, and Christian Church/Churches of Christ viewpoints. ~PRAYER POWER, How to Pray When You Think You Can't. by Marci Alborghetti. A practical guide to spiritual renewal through prayer. ~SUNRISE, by Karen Kingsbury . A novel for women. The New York Times describes Mrs Kingsbury as America's #1 inspirational novelist. ~THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING PANDAS, DVD, A video starring Chadder Chipmunk. (Used for last year's VBS.)



Souper Bowl of Caring—“Lord, as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us to be mindful of those without even a bowl of soup to eat.” Souper Bowl of Caring began with this prayer more than 20 years ago, and on **February 4th & 5th**, we will continue to remember and take action to share God’s love with those in need. Please find members of our high school youth group carrying soup kettles before or after worship and give generously to feed the hungry. All gifts will be given to the Wednesday night PADS meals and Woodstock Food Pantry.

Music4Martin 2012—It’s our 10th Anniversary! M4M is a multi-cultural, multi-generational event that brings together local artists to celebrate the messages of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. through live music, video and spoken word. Your attendance will honor the talent and hard work of all of the M4M 2012 players AND the ongoing legacy of Dr. King. Join us here at Grace on **March 11** at 3:30 p.m.

Calling All Cooks—Lent is fast approaching and once again we are looking for some volunteers to cook up some pots of soup for our Lenten soup lunches. If you love to cook we would love to have your help. For more information or to sign up see the activity binder or call Shirley Busse at 815-338-9063.

Adult Education Committee Seeks New Members—With the new year now begun, please give some prayerful consideration to where God may be calling you to serve in the months ahead. The Adult Education Committee is interested in receiving new members. The committee’s role is to nurture a dynamic lifelong learning community at Grace Lutheran Church. All are welcome. If you would like to participate but don’t want to join the committee at this time, other ways to assist are also available. Please see a committee member for more information: Howard Hoyt (chair), Andy Bellavia, Roberta Herzog, Roger Oberman, Matt Simonton (council liaison), or Pastor Amanda Bergstrom.

Woodstock Diaper Bank—Do you need diapers or incontinence supplies? The Vine Christian Church, a partner with the St. Paul Diaper Bank Partnership, now offers diapers for children and adults. To receive diapers, an application form must be filled out in advance. All who ask will receive. Elderly in need of diapers are encouraged to apply. Applications will be taken on Tuesday **Feb. 7** from 9 a.m.—10 p.m. at The Vine Ministry Center located at 1132 N. Madison in Woodstock. At the corner of Madison and Greenwood Circle. For more information call 815-338-3380.



Internationally Acclaimed Wartburg College Choir to Visit Grace! - On **April 26th** the Wartburg College Choir under the direction of Dr. Lee Nelson will perform at Grace as a part of their 2012 Wartburg Choir National tour. A choir of around a hundred voices, the Wartburg Choir has a storied and long standing history of excellence in choral music. You will want to be in attendance.

Grace members will also be asked to serve as host families as we will be an overnight stop here in Woodstock. If you think you can host two or even more college youth for a night. Many arrangements are being made to make this a very successful stop and a magical musical evening here at Grace. A signup sheet for hosting is in the Activity Binder at the information desk.

Rummage Sale Dates Set—Keep in mind our rummage sale as you find items to donate. The set-up dates for the sale are **May 14, 15, and 16**, and the sale dates are **May 17, 18 and 19**. Any questions, please contact Nancy Berkholtz.

Newsletter Deadline—All *Grace for Today* articles for the February 8th issue should be sent to Lynn Nattress at Inattress@gracewoodstock.org or to the church office by noon on Thursday, February 2nd.

The Grace Trifecta – It Can Transfigure Many Lives—Start whistling “O When the Saints, O when the saints...”. Yes, Transfiguration Weekend is almost here again. Write “GRACE” in big letters on **February 18-19**. This year for Grace, the heartbeat of America that was born in the music of New Orleans will be felt again in Woodstock and will climax as 29 of our youth and their chaperones arrive this summer in that city of great tradition. There they will gather with around 35,000 other young people at the ELCA “Citizens With The Saints” Youth Gathering to worship, fellowship and serve God’s kingdom on earth.

How all this happens begins as we join together for worship at all three services to celebrate Jesus’ mountaintop experience by hearing the story, sharing his meal and singing music set in the American tradition of Dixieland.

The Dixie tradition carries on as we move from spiritual fulfillment to filling our stomachs with chili of all kinds created by the chili chefs of Grace. Your taste buds will rejoice at the variety and quality of Grace’s transfiguring chili offerings. Be sure to sign up in the narthex whether you want to provide a chili specialty, to bring ingredients for others to work with or side items (see list) or just to let us know you plan to be there to be a lucky recipient.

Bellies filled, you’ll be ready to participate in our huge Youth Auction where service and amazing items and opportunities will go to the highest bidder. Most importantly, the proceeds you provide will make up a major portion of funds needed to send those 29 young people to this awesome Youth Gathering in the home of Dixieland. If you would like to donate an item for this year’s Youth Auction, please contact Pastor Amanda.

So plan today to be on hand for your own transfiguring experience and to help enable the transfiguring of many of our youth as well as those they touch in service.

This is also the weekend when our church’s opportunity to share God’s grace is the greatest. The offer is unique in McHenry County. This is the kind of opportunity that makes it EASY to invite our neighbors, people we work with and those we just find God has placed on our daily path of life. Take the opportunity. Bring lots of people as participants in this Christ-filled Trifecta. Together, let’s celebrate in worship, fellowship and service.



Preschool News—Registration for the 2012/2013 school year is now OPEN! Please contact the preschool office for informational packets or to schedule a tour. Sessions are available for children ages 2 thru 5.

~Join us on Friday, **February 10th** for our Annual Winter Fundraising Dinner.

~OPEN HOUSE will be held on Saturday, **March 3rd**, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. Meet the teachers and visit our classrooms.

~Substitutes are still needed. If you or someone you know has experience working with young children in the Early Childhood Education field, please stop by the office for a sub packet.

Life Line Screening Preventive Health Events— Have You Taken Control of Your Health Today?

Life Line Screening will be at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church on Tuesday, **February 14, 2012** offering five safe, painless, non-invasive preventive health screenings that are typically not part of a routine physical.

These screenings are recommended for anyone 50 and older, or 40 and over with cardiovascular risk factors. They are non-invasive, painless, and take 60-90 minutes to complete. The results, which are mailed directly to you, will help you and your doctor protect your health. Stroke, Vascular and Heart Rhythm Package range from \$129.00 to \$159.00. This event is also being sponsored by Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital.

Pre-register in the Activity Binder at the Information Center, and receive \$10 off of the package price. You may also call to register at 1-888-653-6441 or visit www.lifelinescreening.com/community-partners.

Here is your link to the Weekend Worship Participants:

Schedule:<http://www.gracewoodstock.org/WeeklyNews/Monthly%20Worship%20Participants.pdf>

THE WEEKS AHEAD AT GRACE

Saturday, January 28

9:00 AM Band
5:00 PM Worship

Sunday, January 29

8:30 AM Traditional Worship
9:45 AM Education Hour
10:45 AM Contemporary Worship
12:05 PM Annual Congregational Meeting
1:00 PM CPR Class
2:00 PM Patrol Leader Conference
5:00 PM Youthful Spirit
6:30 PM Graceful Ringers
6:30 PM High School Choir

Monday, January 30

9:00 AM Preschool 2, 4, 4 & 5
6:30 PM Boy Scout Troop 153
6:30 PM Church Volleyball League

Tuesday, January 31

9:00 AM Preschool 2, 3, 4 & 5
7:00 PM Women Praise

Wednesday, February 1

9:00 AM Preschool 2, 4, 4 & 5
12:30 PM Staff Meeting
5:00 PM Messenger Choir
5:15 PM PrimeTime Dinner-Potluck
5:30 PM 2 Yr. Old Class/Cherub Choir
6:00 PM Conf. Fellowship/Rev. Ringers
6:15 PM Joyful Sound Choir
6:30 PM Confirmation Class
6:30 PM H.S. Youth Group
7:00 PM Chancel Choir

Thursday, February 2

9:00 AM Preschool 2, 3, 4 & 5
7:00 PM Worship & Music Comm. Mtg.

Friday, February 3

9:00 AM Preschool 4, 4 & 5

Saturday, February 4

Souper Bowl of Caring
9:00 AM Band
5:00 PM Worship

Sunday, February 5

Souper Bowl of Caring
8:30 AM Traditional Worship
9:45 AM Education Hour
10:45 AM Contemporary Worship
5:00 PM Youthful Spirit
6:30 PM Graceful Ringers
6:30 PM High School Choir

Monday, February 6

9:00 AM Preschool 2, 4, 4 & 5
6:30 PM Boy Scout Troop 153
6:30 PM Church Volleyball League

Tuesday, February 7

9:00 AM Preschool 2, 3, 4 & 5
9:00 AM Sewing Circle
6:30 PM Evangelism Committee Mtg.
6:30 PM Spirituality Team Meeting

Wednesday, February 8

9:00 AM Preschool 2, 4, 4 & 5
9:30 AM MOPS
12:30 PM Staff Meeting
5:00 PM Messenger Choir
5:15 PM PrimeTime Dinner-Italian Beef
5:30 PM 2 Yr. Old Class/Cherub Choir
6:00 PM Conf. Fellowship/Rev. Ringers
6:15 PM Joyful Sound Choir
6:30 PM Confirmation Class
6:30 PM H.S. Youth Group

Thursday, February 9

9:00 AM Preschool 2, 3, 4 & 5

Friday, February 10

9:00 AM Preschool 4, 4 & 5
5:30 PM Grace Preschool Winter Fundraiser Dinner

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