



**GRACE
LUTHERAN CHURCH**

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Grace for Today

JANUARY 8, 2014—JANUARY 21, 2014 • VOLUME 13, NO. 1

NEW YEAR WITH NEW “CONNECTIONS!”

CLASS TO START JANUARY 13.....by Pastor Ken Gibson

Recently I was asked the following question; “Well Pastor; what is this *Connections* course, you are offering, all about?” Here are some highlights of the course and please know there is still time to sign up!



The goal of *Connections* is to help participants meet God in their everyday lives. The material is designed to help them connect faith and daily living by moving back and forth between God and self, self and others, world and Word. The study connects the Christian faith with the worlds of everyday life. The word “connect” even means the same as the word “religion” (from the word religare, “to bind back together”). Both words imply wholeness. If lives are torn apart by the rigors of everyday life, religion that is centered on God’s actions in the world ties God’s people together. If lives are torn apart by the differences between Sunday and Monday, *Connections* helps put them back together.

Connections provides an arena in which we can ask difficult questions and consider answers within the framework of Christian faith. The specific objectives of the program are to help participants to:

- ~ See their worlds as God’s creation.
- ~ Recognize Christ’s redemption in their lives.
- ~ Discover that they are already in ministry.
- ~ Be nurtured in their skills and gifts for ministry.
- ~ Live out the call of their Baptism in their daily lives.
- ~ Share their faith and life connections so that they can support one another.
- ~ Be accountable in their callings to God and to one another.

I do so hope this course will be a spring board for other courses in the months ahead. Please feel free to contact me or Mary Beth Martin-Bellavia if you have any further questions or just sign up on the Activity Board in the narthex! Happy New Year!

LIFE LINE SCREENING—Life Line Screening, will host their affordable, non-invasive and painless health screenings on **Jan. 10, 2014**. Five screenings will be offered that scan for potential health problems. Register for a Wellness Package which includes 4 vascular tests and osteoporosis screening from \$149 (\$139 member discount). All five screenings take 60-90 minutes to complete. Register for this event and receive a \$10 discount off any package priced above \$129, please call 1-888-653-6441 or visit www.lifelinescreening.com/community-partners.

NEW MEMBER BREAKFAST—We will be hosting an orientation/new member breakfast on **Jan. 11, 2014** at 10:00 a.m. in Grace Center. If you have been worshiping with us and would like to become a member of Grace, please sign up in the Activity Binder at the Information Center or call the church office at 815-338-0554.

BABY SHOWER! - We are hosting a Baby Shower for Pastor Amanda and Jon. Join us Sunday, **Jan. 12, 2014** at 9:30 a.m. in Luther Hall. Please make a gift to the baby’s college fund and/or bring baby food, diapers and books to be given to DAP. We will be serving cake and coffee. Thank you and hope to see you there.

WORSHIP TODAY

Sunday, January 12, 2014
Baptism of Our Lord

INTRODUCTION: In the waters of the Jordan, Jesus is revealed as the beloved Son of God. Through this great epiphany, Jesus fulfills all righteousness and becomes the servant of God who will bring forth justice and be a light to the nations. In the waters of baptism we too are washed by the Word, anointed by the Spirit, and named God's beloved children. Our baptismal mission is to proclaim good news to all who are oppressed or in need of God's healing.

READINGS: Isaiah 42:1-9

Psalms 29

Acts 10:34-43

Matthew 3:13-17

Sunday, January 19, 2014
Second Sunday after Epiphany / Lectionary 2

INTRODUCTION: Today's gospel opens with further reflection on Jesus' baptism. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and the one anointed by the Spirit. In the liturgy we come and see Christ revealed among us in word and meal. We go forth to invite others to come and worship the Holy One, and to receive the gifts of grace and peace made known among us.

READINGS:

Isaiah 49:1-7

Psalms 40:1-11

1 Corinthians 1:1-9

John 1:29-42

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 Eaton, Bishop Wollersheim; those serving in military conflicts, Arusha Town Lutheran Parish in Tanzania (our companion parish), Scott Bunch serving overseas

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

Health Concerns: Phyllis Aavang, Lori Acosta, Lois Bloese, Deanna Bohn, Allison Clark (niece of Martha Fleck), Erin Clark (sister-in-law of Martha Fleck), Marge Dierksen, Betty Dusthimer (sister of Diane Thurow), George Erber, Patrick Fraily (friend of August and Theo Hutchens), Dee Fritsch, Gloria Holy, Patrice Hoover, August Hutchens, Theo Hutchens, Ruth Iwanicki, Sue Jensen, John Johnson (brother of Jerry Johnson), Diane Knowles, Vincent Lopez (father of Tom Lopez), Cheryl Marback, Gail Mueller, Connie Myjak (friend of Shirley Berna), Jesse Myjak, June Noel (mother of Marylee Steinwehe), Herb Neubaum, Don Nusbaum, Gloria Ogle, Alice Pate, Charlotte Petersdorf (mother of Gladys Renner), Georgia Petersdorf (sister-in-law of Gladys Renner), Hazel Powell, Shawn Rank (son of Bert & Carol Rank), Jeff Roberts, Joshua Rumschlog (great grandson of Eileen Weide), Ellen Schulz (daughter-in-law of Diane Schulz), Louise Smith, John Sorensen, Rita Specht-Hartwig, Margaret Stawicki (mother of Nan Goerlitz), Carol Thompson (daughter of Marge Dierksen), Josh Tillman, Kristin Thurow, Joe Vanskike, Lena Wells (friend of Joe & Deborrah Evanoff)

Sorrows: Mark Schwalm and Helen Schwalm (grandparents of Mark Schwanke)

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 member is hospitalized. If you or a member of your family have a medical procedure planned or is admitted to the hospital, please call the church office at 815-338-0554.

NEW YEAR, NEW YOU.....by Pastor Amanda Bergstrom



Amid the endless retail emails I have received over the past month and a half, today I received one from Amazon advertising “New Year, New You in 2014- Everything you need to start the year off right.” As you may have guessed, the first image in the email features a few of the things that just might boost one’s New Year’s resolutions: bright new gym shoes, a smart watch, and a can of low sodium V8. After all of the Christmas celebrations, family meals, holiday treats, or even fast-food while traveling, it’s no wonder we are so inclined to give New Year’s resolutions another try this year.

Yet I know if I were to depend on my own ability to stick to each of the New Year’s resolutions I have made over time, I would not find a brand new me. Over the past several New Year’s Eves and New Year’s Days, I have enjoyed taking time to look back at the past year. Jon and I will sit down and look at all the pictures we have taken and talk about the memories we have of different events. Sometimes I will scan through my calendar to remember what took place, and Facebook even provides a personalized 2013 in Review page to help remind us of the past year. However, I do not think there are enough items or fancy gadgets to purchase that could fully equip me for a “new year, new you;” because the lasting changes, the newness I experience in my life comes about from something far greater than my own resolve or goal-setting.

The greatest sense of a ‘new me’ that I feel comes each time I remember God’s promises and claims. Whenever we confess our sins and hear God’s forgiveness, I feel as though I am made new once more. Each time I look at the baptismal font, dip my fingers in the cool waters, and trace the sign of the cross on my forehead, I feel as though I have been made new. And each time I taste that piece of bread dipped in wine at communion, I feel ready for a new week ahead.

I think it would be most fitting for us to look ahead to the coming year, brimming with possibilities and unknowns, with our eyes open to see “a new day, a new you.” God is truly at work in the world and in our lives, and we are always being made new. So as you look to the treadmill or your spending trends or whatever else you may feel called to address this year, remember how God’s grace, forgiveness and love equips you for change and new life. May this great promise and gift sustain you both in your New Year’s resolutions and throughout each and every day of this new year before us.

SENIOR LUNCHEON— Tuesday, **January 28** - Home Safe Home - 5 places to improve access at your home. Each year 1 in every 3 adults age 65 and older experience a fall and unfortunately people who experience a fall are 2/3 more likely to fall again. While you or a loved one is aging in place, it’s important to keep your home as safe and hazard free as possible. Nick Lopez of 101 Mobility, Chicago, offers some helpful insights and tips to make your home more accessible. Our menu starts off with Sweet Napa Salad, Easy Chicken Stuffing Bake, Hawaiian Rolls and Pistachio Pudding Parfaits for dessert. Cost is \$5.00 Sign up in the Activity Binder by **January 26** . Questions, call Shirley Busse 815-338-9063.

PRESCHOOL NEWS! - On **January 7, 2014**, registration for the next school year opened to all currently enrolled preschool families as well as all Grace Lutheran Church members. Forms can be picked up at the preschool office or the Information Center. On **February 8, 2014** registration opens up to all interested families and all are welcome to attend our OPEN HOUSE. Registration continues throughout our current school year for those parents that feel their child is ready. Call Mrs. Chris at 815-338-0554 x213 or email at clear-man@gracewoodstock.org for a registration packet or to schedule a visit.

MISTLETOE MAGIC—Do you want to recycle those wonderful department store paper bags from all of your Christmas shopping? We can use them for Mistletoe Magic 2014. The bags may be placed in the bin marked MMagic under the coat racks off of the Narthex. Thanks! Contact Cathy Meyer with questions: 815-338-0512 or tcmeier2@gmail.com.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE—All *Grace for Today* articles for the **January 22** issue should be sent to Lynn Nattress at lnattress@gracewoodstock.org or to the church office by noon on Tuesday, **January 14**.



CONSTITUTION CHANGES/VOTE—At the Annual Meeting, **February 9, 2014**, we will be voting on changes to our Grace Lutheran Church constitution. Every three years at the Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA, the Model Constitution for Congregations is reviewed and any proposed revisions are voted upon. These revisions are then sent to congregations. Many of the changes are required for all ELCA congregations to adopt. Typically, they involve clarifying language or updating to reflect current practices such as the use of email in notifications.

Our current Grace Lutheran Constitution has not been updated since 2000 which means that there are a significant number of revisions that need to be incorporated. As stated above, the vast number of these changes are required of all ELCA congregations. Pr. Ken, Pr. Amanda, Peter Paulson and Mary Beth Martin-Bellavia met as a small group to review these required changes and to discuss changes that were recommended by the ELCA but not required. All of these revisions, required and not required, were then presented to the Church Council for discussion and approval. The proposed changes were then sent to the Northern Illinois Synod Constitution Review Committee for their comments. Based upon their feedback a few revisions were made and again approved by the Church Council.

These proposed changes to the Grace Lutheran Constitution will be presented and voted upon at our February meeting. We need a majority vote of approval at this meeting. The revisions are then presented again without change at our next Congregational Meeting and need to be approved by a two-thirds vote.

The proposed updated Grace Lutheran constitution will be available for review in both an electronic and paper form. Paper copies will be available at the Information Center and the electronic version will be emailed to those who have provided the church office with an email address for contact. Our current constitution is located on our website. Click on Communications and Documents and then click on Forms and Documents. Paper versions of our current constitution will also be available at the Information Center.

If you have any questions, please contact Mary Beth Martin-Bellavia at mbmartinbellavia@gmail.com, or 815-338-5194.

PHOTO PICK-UP—If you elected to have your complimentary 8X10 sent to Grace for pick-up we are starting to receive them. You can pick-up your photo up at the Information Center anytime the church is open. If your portrait is not in the current shipment, try back because more are arriving daily.

WOMEN'S RETREAT—All women of Grace and their guests are welcome to attend on **Feb 8 & 9, 2014** at the Loyola Retreat Center here in Woodstock. (Overnight or Single Day options available) Our Speaker will be Jeanette Levellie, author of *Two Scoops of Grace With Chuckles on Top*. As a former history/government teacher with an Associate's degree in English, Jeanette enjoys speaking to church and civic groups, offering mirth and worth in every message. "Jeanette Levellie is truly the Erma Bombeck of Christian Writers. Her many humorous anecdotes drive home a serious message: God in his Grace loves and accepts each of us unconditionally through Jesus Christ. *Two Scoops of Grace* will bring a smile (or ten, or fifty) to your face and encouragement to your heart." Additional information and registration forms are available now at the Information Center.



BREAD FOR THE DAY DEVOTIONAL 2014—Are **NOW** available for purchase in the church office. Lets join together and read this day by day Lutheran devotional. Only a limited supply will be available so act soon. The cost of each book is \$8.00. Any questions please contact Denise in the church office.

PRESENCE LIGHT & BULLETIN SPONSORS FOR 2014— The new sign-up sheets are at the Information Center. Sign-up today!

MARTIN LUTHER HERITAGE TOUR—Shepherd of the Prairie Lutheran Church in Huntley invites you to consider joining them for a Luther Heritage Tour in Germany, **Sept. 12-21, 2014**. For more information see the informational brochure at the Information Center, or contact Sharon Little, skl55little@mac.com.

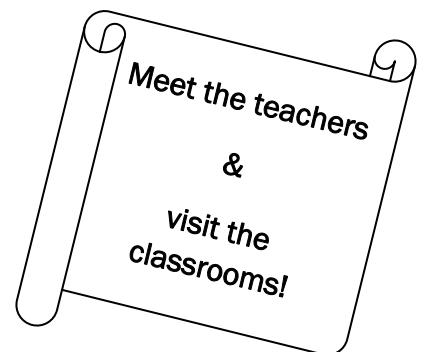


Grace Lutheran Preschool

OPEN HOUSE

for 2014/2015 school year

February 8th, 2014 Saturday



Classes offered for children ages 2, 3, 4, & 5!

2 year old/1 day = \$70 mo.

2 year old/2 day = \$125 mo.

3 year old/2 day = \$130 mo.

4 year old/3 day = \$160 mo.

4 1/2 & 5 year olds

4 day program = \$210 mo. & 5 day program = \$260 mo.

\$50 Annual Registration Fee at time of enrollment

Both morning and afternoon sessions available.

Information & Registration forms available online @

www.gracewoodstock.org

For more information or to schedule a visit please call Preschool Director Chris Learman at 815/338-0554 x213
Grace Lutheran Church Preschool does not discriminate by race, color, and national or ethnic origin.

Here is your link to the Weekend Worship Participants:

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

THE WEEKS AHEAD AT GRACE

Visit the Grace website for the most up-to-date information for all that is happening at Grace!



Saturday, January 11

9:00 AM Band
10:00 AM New Member Breakfast
5:00 PM Worship

Sunday, January 12

8:30 AM Traditional Worship
9:30 AM Bergstrom Baby Shower
9:30 AM Sunday by Sunday Book Group
9:45 AM Education Hour
10:45 AM Contemporary Worship
5:15 PM Youthful Spirit
6:30 PM Graceful Ringers/Laudate

Monday, January 13

9:00 AM Preschool 2s, 4s, 4-1/2s, 5s
6:00 PM Woodstock Church Volleyball
6:30 PM Boy Scout Troop 153
7:00 PM Connection's Bible Study

Tuesday, January 14

9:00 AM Preschool 2s, 3s, 4-1/2s, 5s
12:30 PM Preschool 3s
6:45 PM All Committee Meeting
7:00 PM Endowment Meeting

Wednesday, January 15

9:00 AM Preschool 2s, 4s, 4-1/2s, 5s
12:30 PM Staff Meeting
5:00 PM Messengers
5:15 PM PrimeTime—Staff Choice
5:30 PM Cherubs
6:00 PM Confirmation/Revelation Ringers
6:15 PM Joyful Sound
7:00 PM Chancel

Thursday, January 16

9:00 AM Preschool 2s, 3s, 4-1/2s, 5s
12:00 PM DAP
12:30 PM Preschool 3s
7:00 PM Chancel

Friday, January 17

9:00 AM Preschool 4s, 4-1/2s, 5s

Saturday, January 18

9:00 AM Band
9:00 AM Decorating Committee
5:00 PM Worship
6:00 PM Fair Trade Coffee

Sunday, January 19

8:30 AM Traditional Worship
9:30 AM Adult Forum-Proposed 2014 Budget
9:30 AM Blood Pressure Checks

Sunday, January 19 continued

9:30 AM Fair Trade Coffee
9:30 AM Sunday by Sunday Book Group
9:45 AM Education Hour
10:45 AM Contemporary Worship
5:15 PM Youthful Spirit
6:30 PM Graceful Ringers/Laudate

Monday, January 20

Martin Luther King Jr. Day / Church Office Closed
6:00 PM Woodstock Church Volleyball
6:30 PM BSA Troop 153
7:00 PM Connection's Bible Study
7:00 PM Faith Circle

Tuesday, January 21

9:00 AM Preschool 2s, 3s, 4-1/2s, 5s
9:00 AM Sewing Circle
12:30 PM Preschool 3s

Wednesday, January 22

9:00 AM Preschool 2s, 4s, 4-1/2s, 5s
9:30 AM MOPS
12:30 PM Staff Meeting
5:00 PM Messengers
5:15 PM PrimeTime—Pizza
5:30 PM Cherubs
6:00 PM Confirmation/Revelation Ringers
6:15 PM Joyful Sound
7:00 PM Chancel Choir

Thursday, January 23

9:00 AM Preschool 2s, 3s, 4-1/2s, 5s
12:00 PM DAP
12:30 PM Preschool 3s
1:00 PM Naomi Circle
7:00 PM New Praise Singers

Friday, January 24

9:00 AM Preschool 4s, 4-1/2s, 5s
11:15 AM Adoration

Saturday, January 25

9:00 AM Band
5:00 PM Worship

GRACE STAFF & COUNCIL

Senior Pastor

Rev. Kenneth D. Gibson
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Associate Pastor

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Tammy Baier, Carrie Filetti

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Preschool Staff

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Nancy Mojica, Kristy Nellesen

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Building Supervisor/Ken Zank

Custodians/Chris & Kim Ethridge

Officers & Council

Mary Beth Martin-Bellavia;
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Ken Hansing; Matt Simonton; Rob Ribbe;
Cathy Buhrow; Joe Pienschke;
Adele Petersen; Sue Olsen; Abigail Kreznor
council@gracewoodstock.org

Office Hours: 8:30 am–3:30 pm, M–Th
8:30 am–12:00 pm, F