



GRACE
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Grace *for* Today

FEBRUARY 5, 2014—FEBRUARY 18, 2014 • VOLUME 13, NO. 3

In The Midst of it All.....by Pastor Ken Gibson

Ok so this winter is starting to feel a bit like the winters I once enjoyed, (yes I said enjoyed) in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Now I am sure that some of you are wondering just how one could “enjoy” such winters, somewhat like what we have been undergoing here in northern Illinois this year. Well a couple of things come to mind. (And “No” one of them is not an escape trip to Florida, which I did for a few days.)



First of all, I am amazed each day at the beauty of this winter. Each day as I gaze out my office window I can’t help but marvel at the beauty that is the winter landscape. There is a stillness to it on these cold crisp mornings that causes me to pause a bit and take note of the wonder of it all, and to thank God for the beauty of this season. Winter, if it is going to be winter, needs to have snow and we certainly have had plenty of that this winter. I will share that the UP has had nearly 150 inches above what we have experienced so far, they are over two hundred and we are around fifty I think. So what else is good about winter? Well for one thing I find it easier to curl up with a good book and find some time to get caught up on some reading. How many of you have read a good book lately? I am reading one now that I really find hard to put down, and that is such a treat. In general I find the winter months to be a more reflective time for me, a time where I am thinking more deeply and praying more intently and in the midst of it all, I find more love of God and thankfulness for the gifts I have in life. Home, family, friends, church, ministry, sense of call, it is all good.

One other thing we found when living up north was that we needed to find a way to get out in it. To embrace the winter, be a part of the winter, and do winter type things. These included snow shoeing, cross country skiing and ice skating, and yes we even went snowmobiling. This made the winter apart of our lives not something we tried to shelter against and just survive. To that end I suggest that if winter is going to progress, let us find some cross country ski trails and some snow shoe tracks all over our campus. Jodi and I will join in, if someone wants to make some trails around our property, we have plenty of space and more than enough snow, so who wants to get into the midst of it all?

Finally, one of the greatest things I enjoyed about life in the north county was the way in which together we lived through it. It was a way of everyone looking out for the other, and the joy of spending time together. One highlight was an annual “winter coffee” put on by a member where we would all gather out in the woods, bringing baked goods and treats all the while a fire is made and a big batch of homemade coffee is brewed on an open fire, of course hot water for hot chocolate was also available, and even an open flame hot dog was consumed. It was a way of celebrating, (in fellowship), that the winter was another season of God’s earth and we together are in the midst of it all. So then, if anyone is interested in a winter coffee, count me in, for in the midst of it all, there are we, and there is God reminding us that we are in the midst of it all together.

WORSHIP TODAY

Sunday, February 9, 2014
Fifth Sunday after Epiphany / Lectionary 5

INTRODUCTION: Light shines in the darkness for the upright, the psalmist sings. Isaiah declares that when we loose the bonds of injustice and share our bread with the hungry, the light breaks forth like the dawn. In another passage from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus, the light of the world, calls his followers to let the light of their good works shine before others. Through baptism we are sent into the world to shine with the light of Christ.

READINGS: Isaiah 58:1-9a [9b-12]

Psalms 112:1-9 [10]

1 Corinthians 2:1-12 [13-16]

Matthew 5:13-20

Sunday, February 16, 2014
Sixth Sunday after Epiphany / Lectionary 6

INTRODUCTION: In today's reading from Deuteronomy we are called to choose life by loving and obeying God. Much of today's gospel reading echoes portions of the Ten Commandments. Jesus' instructions to the crowd reveal a pattern of behavior that honors both God and neighbor, resulting in life and health for the whole community. We, too, are invited to embrace these commandments, not out of fear of retribution, but because God has promised that to do so means life for us.

READINGS: Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Psalms 119:1-8

1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Matthew 5:21-37

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 in the military

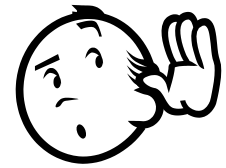
Woodstock: Pastor Ken Gibson and his family; Pastor Amanda Bergstrom and her family; Grace Staff; Grace Council

Health Concerns: Phyllis Aavang, Lori Acosta, Lois Bloese, Deanna Bohn, Allison Clark (niece of Martha Fleck), Erin Clark (sister-in-law of Martha Fleck), Caryl Dierksen, 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), Wanda Kiefer (friend of Bobbi Davis), 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, Lena Wells (friend of Joe & Deborah Evanoff)

Sorrow: Joe Vanskike

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.

LISTEN, GOD IS CALLING.....by Pastor Amanda Bergstrom



“Listen, listen God is calling, through the Word inviting, offering forgiveness, comfort, and joy.” ~ELW 513

Last week in worship, we heard the story of Jesus calling fishermen to become disciples as Jesus said ‘follow me, and I will make you fish for people’ (Matthew 4:12-23). Remarkably, the disciples immediately left their nets, left their boats and their family and followed Jesus. Pastor Ken invited us to consider how we might answer God’s call to come and follow, yes, for some to answer the call as clergy, and for all to answer the call to ministry in our daily lives.

I wonder how God might be calling to you through the Word, inviting you to follow, while offering you forgiveness, comfort, and joy. As we gather for our Annual Meeting next Sunday (**February 9** at 12:05 p.m.), we will look back on the past year of life and ministry at Grace, and look ahead to another year of sharing God’s grace in this congregation, in the community, and across the world. In what way is God calling you to follow? Is there a particular ministry area that you feel called to participate in? A new ministry you would like to start? Something that you feel your gifts and talents would support?

Whether or not you know right now and are willing to immediately ‘come and follow Jesus’ in a new way, I pray that you spend time in prayer and conversation with others over the next few weeks. Consider what you are most passionate about, and what gifts you have to offer. Think about the variety of ministries in this place, and imagine which new calling might bring you great joy. If you have questions about a particular ministry area, please ask Pastor Ken or myself, or call or email the church office and we would all be glad to tell you more or connect you with other people with similar passions and interests.

I think it would be wonderful to return from maternity leave this Spring and see how God has been calling you. Perhaps we will have new people guiding the way as we implement our strategic planning goals, maybe our monthly all-committee night will have welcomed a few new faces at the table, perhaps you might be considering a way to assist with worship leadership as a reader, deacon, or assisting minister. Who knows how and where God might be calling us to follow, but please be sure to listen, for God is surely calling.

Let us pray. “O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.” (ELW p. 317)

PRESCHOOL NEWS! - 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 clearman@gracewoodstock.org for a registration packet or to schedule a visit.

ANNUAL MEETING—Be sure to save the date of **Feb 9** for the Annual Meeting following the 10:45 a.m. service at approximately 12:05. A Ministry Matters presentation will follow the Annual Meeting. Annual reports have been e-mailed and copies are available at the Information Center.

CONSTITUTION CHANGES/VOTE—At the Annual Meeting, **Feb. 9, 2014**, we will be voting on changes to our Grace Lutheran Church constitution. Paper copies of the proposed changes are 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. Paper versions of our current constitution are available at the Information Center. For questions, please contact Mary Beth Martin-Bellavia at mbmartinbellavia@gmail.com, or 815-338-5194.



HABITAT HOUSE WELCOME AND BLESSING— On **Feb 9** at 12:00 p.m., Habitat For Humanity will welcome the Maria Fonseca Family into their new home which some of the congregation helped to construct on our ELCA Service Day. The welcome and blessing will take place at 12:00 p.m. at 1912 Lakewood Ave., McHenry, IL.



JOIN THE SONG IN TWO DIFFERENT EVENTS! - Sing with 6 WACM member churches in it's annual concert fundraiser on **Feb. 23** at 7 pm; and/or our own Dixieland Celebration of Transfiguration services **Mar. 2**. Rehearsals include Weds. nights starting **Feb. 5**. 7:30-8:15 pm for our Dixieland services and 8:15-9 pm for the WACM concert, plus two combined choir rehearsals. Let Ron Fredriksen or a choir member know you plan to sing so we can have materials ready when you arrive.

MMAGIC CRAFT WORKSHOP—Join us **Feb. 18** at 1:00 p.m. for a craft workshop. All supplies provided, no experience required. Contact Cathy Meyer, Sue Aavang, or Karen Reinhard for additional information.



MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR LILLIAN FRENCH— Grace member Lillian French will be remembered at a Memorial Service on **Feb. 19** here at Grace. Visitation will be at 10:30 a.m., followed by a Memorial Service at 11:00 a.m. Luncheon will follow the service downstairs in Grace Center.

AN INTRODUCTION TO CENTERING PRAYER—St. Mary Episcopal Church, CL invites everyone to join them for a seven session prayer program. The program consists of a 6-hour workshop and six 1-1/2 hour follow-up sessions. Workshop is **Feb 22** from 9:30 a.m.—3:00 p.m. Follow-up sessions are Thursdays beginning March 6. Cost is \$25 for all sessions. Scholarships available. Contact Robert Bishop, 815-459-9475, or Chris Moore, 847-814-1859 for additional information.

BLOOD DRIVE at Grace on **Feb. 23 2014** from 7:30 am to 11:30 am. Please help share the blessing of good health through a blood donation. Come to the education narthex to fill out forms before donating. Sign-up on the Activity Board in the narthex.



SENIOR LUNCHEON— Tuesday, **February 25** - Travel with us to Germany this month! Our all German menu features Black Forest Turkey, Nuremberg Bratwurst, Austrian Sweet Mustard, Egg Spaetzle, German Style Sauerkraut, Red Cabbage with Apples, German Breads and Pound Cake for Dessert. All menu items have been imported from Germany, so this will be a real treat. After this meal, sit back and visit Germany as Pastor Ken tells us about "His Vacation in Germany". Cost is \$5.00. Sign up in the Activity Binder by **Feb. 23**. Questions, call Shirley Busse 815-338-9063.

MISTLETOE MAGIC— We need some expert administrative computer help. We are looking for someone to help, with the use of Microsoft Excel program, for entering our inventory, tracking items made, sold, price etc. This would be done periodically throughout the year as we finish projects and price all items in the fall. Please contact Cathy Meyer at tcmeier2@gmail.com or call 815-338-0512. Thanks!

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE —All *Grace for Today* articles for the **February 19** issue should be sent to Lynn Nattress at lnattress@gracewoodstock.org or to the church office by noon on Tuesday, **February 11**.

Grace Lutheran Preschool



OPEN HOUSE

February 8th, 2014 Saturday

10:00 a.m. — Noon

CALLING ALL COOKS! – Lenten Soup Lunches – Lent begins on **March 5!** We still have lots of openings for some of Grace’s fine cooks to sign up and make their favorite homemade soup for our soup lunches following the noon Wednesday Worship Service. For more information or to sign-up, see the Activity Binder or call Shirley Busse at 815-338-9063.



NIS CONGREGATIONAL RESOURCING EVENT—Get it on your calendar and invite all your friends! The 2014 NIS Congregational Resourcing Event will be Sat., **March 8** at Kishwaukee College in Malta, IL. Keynote speaker will be Nathan Dungan, CEO of Share, Save, Spend. If you've never attended a CRE - you've got to give it a try. There's something for everyone! It's a terrific event that has been called the best of its kind in the entire ELCA! Find out more at nisynod.org/cre.

WE STILL HAVE A HANDFUL OF PHOTOS THAT NEED TO BE PICKED UP—If you elected to have your complimentary 8X10 from the church directory sent to Grace for pick up we have placed them on the Information Center. If your portrait is not in the box please notify Carrie Fiorina in the church office.

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.

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.

WE NEED YOUR STORIES— Not every church member can attend all events, and we want to hear about your experiences, so we would like you to share your follow-up stories here. Share a follow-up story with your Grace Family. You can also send a “View From The Pew”. You may submit your articles to Lynn Nattress at lnattress@gracewoodstock.org. (Follow-up stories will run as time and space permit, and may be edited.)

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, February 8

9:00 AM Band
9:00 AM Women's Retreat 2014
10:00 AM Grace Preschool Open House
5:00 PM Worship

Sunday, February 9

8:30 AM Traditional Worship
9:30 AM Sunday by Sunday Book Group
9:30 AM Winter Wonderland Ticket Sales
9:45 AM Education Hour
10:45 AM Contemporary Worship
12:00 PM Congregational Meeting
12:30 PM Ministry Matters
5:15 PM Youthful Spirit
6:30 PM Graceful Ringers/Laudate

Monday, February 10

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, February 11

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

Wednesday, February 12

9:00 AM Preschool 2s, 4s, 4-1/2s, 5s
12:30 PM Staff Meeting
5:00 PM Messengers
5:15 PM PrimeTime—Soup & Sandwiches
5:30 PM Cherubs
6:00 PM Confirmation/Revelation Ringers
6:15 PM Joyful Sound
7:00 PM Chancel
7:30 PM Festival Singers
8:15 PM WACM

Thursday, February 13

9:00 AM Preschool 2s, 3s, 4-1/2s, 5s
12:00 PM DAP
12:30 PM Preschool 3s
6:30 PM BSA—Sycamore Dist. Round Table

Friday, February 14

9:00 AM Preschool 4s, 4-1/2s, 5s
10:00 AM Adoration

Saturday, February 15

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

Sunday, February 16

8:30 AM Traditional Worship
9:30 AM Blood Pressure Checks
9:30 AM Fair Trade
9:45 AM Education Hour/ Sunday by Sunday
10:45 AM Contemporary Worship
5:15 PM Youthful Spirit
6:30 PM Graceful Ringers/Laudate

Monday, February 17

President's 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
7:00 PM WACM Sectional

Tuesday, February 18

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

Wednesday, February 19

9:00 AM Preschool 2s, 4s, 4-1/2s, 5s
10:30 AM Lillian French Gathering/Memorial
5:00 PM Messengers
5:15 PM PrimeTime—Burgers
5:30 PM Cherubs
6:00 PM Confirmation/Revelation Ringers
6:15 PM Joyful Sound
7:00 PM Chancel Choir
7:30 PM Festival Singers Dixieland
8:15 PM WACM Rehearsal

Thursday, February 20

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

Friday, February 21

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

Saturday, February 22

8:00 AM Volunteer Center McHenry County
9:00 AM Band
5:00 PM Worship

GRACE STAFF & COUNCIL

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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

