



GRACE
LUTHERAN CHURCH

1300 Kishwaukee Valley Rd
Woodstock, IL 60098
815 338-0554 - Fax 815 338-0913
E-mail grace@gracewoodstock.org
www.gracewoodstock.org

Grace *for* Today

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BUDGETS, MEMBERS, OUR MISSION AND BEING ; SOME STRAIGHT TALK...by Pastor Ken Gibson



Recently, at this month's senior luncheon while I was sharing information with our senior ministry folks regarding the good practice of funeral planning, I found myself in the middle of a brief discussion regarding giving practices. I think I got there as I was encouraging those in attendance to remember their church in their estate plans and in their wills etc... Truth is, and some "straight talk" on the subject reveals that, our senior members are some of our most generous folks. This is a group of people who have long given of their time and their treasure to forward the mission of their church. I shared with them, and I share now with us all in this article, that in remembering your church in your final plans you have the potential to make perhaps the largest gift to the church we have ever given. I further shared that it takes a great number of giving units to replace one of them in terms of the overall budget. And that leads me to my title above. For the first time since the affirming of my call here with all of you, our budget proposed for the next calendar year is less than it has been in the years passed. Why?

Well in a quick analysis of past giving we can see that some of our much loved members have gone on to eternal glory and while we are growing in numbers we are for all practical purposes only marginally up for this next budget. Our Finance Team and the Council take a very cautious stand when it comes to budgeting and they are very good at their forecasting, therefore, in being safe, they have proposed a budget that is \$6,831.00 less than last year. In truth, I can find that amount in just one of the members who once gave generously in the past and who is now no longer a part of the church on earth. And while our pledges were in fact up ever so slightly in dollars for the coming year, they are not up enough to cover the expected loss of those who we have released to God. So then what to do?

Well, first of all we do not panic; we are in VERY GOOD shape. We continue to be the largest giver of benevolence in our Synod and we show by our efforts in our ministry to this community that we are good and faithful sharing stewards of the resources we have been so blessed to receive. Furthermore, we are in the midst of our "Prepare the Way Capital Campaign" and I have all the confidence in the world that we will be successful in that effort.

Secondly, we stick to the plan; which is our mission! It isn't as if we don't have a plan. For one thing we have the Gospel and the promise of Christ's presence with us in our efforts to Share God's Grace as we make disciples, baptize in the name of our Triune God and in our efforts at teaching and doing all that Christ commands us to do. (See Matthew 28:16-20) Let us recall also that we are in the process of hammering out success on our six strategic goals and they are in many ways the guide for our missional efforts. Come to the annual meeting and hear an update on all of these goals; which leads me to the final thing we should do and that is to "BE." By this I mean to suggest that we BE true to our mission, BE true to the Gospel, BE true to each other and BE alive in Christ for the sake of all of the above.

WORSHIP TODAY

Sunday, February 8, 2015 **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

Psalms 147:1-11, 20c

1 Corinthians 9:16-23

Mark 1:29-39

Sunday, February 15, 2015 **Transfiguration of Our Lord**

INTRODUCTION: The Sundays after Epiphany began with Jesus' baptism and end with three disciples' vision of his transfiguration. In Mark's story of Jesus' baptism, apparently only Jesus sees the Spirit descending and hears the words from heaven. But now Jesus' three closest friends hear the same words naming him God's beloved son. As believers, Paul writes, we are enabled to see the God-light in Jesus' face, because the same God who created light in the first place has shone in our hearts to give us that vision. The light of God's glory in Jesus has enlightened us through baptism and shines in us also for others to see.

READINGS: 2 Kings 2:1-12

Psalms 50:1-6

2 Corinthians 4:3-6

Mark 9:2-9

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, Henry Trebes (friend of the Laird family), Army Reserves, deployed to Cuba

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

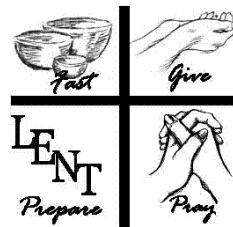
Health Concerns: Gloria & Ken DeRango (mother and step father of Brian Pilgard), Ken DeVogelaere, Marge Dierksen, Betty Dusthimer (sister of Diane Thurow), Juanita Dycus, Tannie Fiorina (mother of John Fiorina), Patrick Fraily (friend of August and Theo Hutchens), Maroulla Hahne (friend of Bill & Martha Fleck), Cindy Hertrampf (sister of Tammy Hansing), Gloria Holy, Patrice Hoover, Mary Hurst (friend of Deborrah Evanoff), August Hutchens, Theo Hutchens, Ruth Iwanicki, Christina Jaggi (friend of Adele Petersen), Donald Janavyak (friend of Shirley Berna), Fila Johnson (sister-in-law to Roberta Herzog), John Johnson (brother of Jerry Johnson), Vincent Lopez (father of Tom Lopez), Debbi Lynd, Nancy McCormick (cousin of Martha Fleck), John McMahan, Gail Mueller, Jesse Myjak, Herb Neubaum, Don Nusbaum, Carol O'Brien (sister of Bill Larsen), Gloria Ogle, Alice Pate, Shawn Rank (son of Bert & Carol Rank), Joshua Rumschlog (great grandson of Eileen Weide), Joan Russell (mother of Sheri Conover), Laura Schoolcraft (wife of Pastor Ed Schoolcraft at Christ Life Church), Dick Schroeder, Ellen Schulz (daughter-in-law of Diane Schulz), Bob Shook, Margaret Stawicki (mother of Nan Goerlitz), Samuel Sweeney (nephew of Melissa McMahan), Carol Thompson (daughter of Marge Dierksen), Josh Tillman, Brian Tobin (grandson of Enn Teetsov), Lauryn Trede (granddaughter of Pat Cervantes), Jerry Virgil (father of Melynda Mauer), Karen Wells, Jeannie Wilcox, Ruth Zirves

Sorrow: Spalding Slevin (father of Elizabeth Karagianis)

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.

PRAYER AROUND THE CROSS- FOR THE HEALING OF THE NATIONS...by Pastor Amanda Bergstrom

As we near the beginning of Lent, the season of the church year where we prepare for Easter, I am looking forward to the opportunity to gather as a community for midweek worship services (**Wednesdays at 12 p.m. & 7 p.m., February 18-March 25**).



This year, we will worship with a beautiful prayer service, **Holden Prayer Around the Cross**. During Lent, as we individually enter into a time of self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love, we will communally gather to pray around the cross. During our midweek worship, we will sing simple repetitive songs, hear scripture, and there will be space and time where you can literally walk, stand, sit, or kneel around the cross to light candles and pray.

The particular prayers and liturgy for our service is called **For the Healing of the Nations**. We call to mind all of creation and God’s people as we pray for the healing of the nations. If you have participated in a past retreat (Wine & Word, or What Would Luther Brew?), or if you were at the recent Women’s Retreat, you may have participated in one portion of this prayer service, the litany of nations, where we pray in song for specific countries.

Gathered around the cross, praying over a map of the world, I have found this brief prayer service to be an incredible worship experience the two times I have participated in it, and I hope that you will take time to pray around the cross this Lenten season. Please, stop by the sanctuary sometime during the week, surround the cross with your thoughts and prayers, and gather for worship on Sundays and our midweek services.

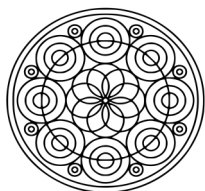
ANNUAL MEETING—Be sure to save the date of **Feb 8** for the Annual Meeting following the 10:45 a.m. service at approximately 12:05 p.m.. A Ministry Matters presentation will follow the Annual Meeting. Annual reports have been e-mailed and hard copies are available at the Information Center.



ADULT BUS TRIP – Sunday, March 1 Our bus will be up front and ready to sweep you away right after the 10:45 service. First we will head over to Jamison’s Restaurant in Huntley to enjoy their fabulous Sunday Brunch. After a leisurely brunch we will head over to Elgin Community College to see their production of “Crazy for You” Set in the 1930’s this rollicking, romantic and timeless musical centers on a well-to-do playboy who dreams of becoming a dancer. It is filled with high-energy dance numbers and classic Gershwin songs, including “I Got Rhythm, Embraceable You, and Someone to Watch Over Me”. **Cost is only \$50**. For more information or to sign up please see the Activity Binder. Deadline to register and pay is **February 8**. For questions, call Shirley Busse

BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS—Free blood pressure checks in the narthex between Sunday services, **Feb 8**.

LENTEN SOUP LUNCHES – Join us Ash Wednesday, **Feb. 18**, after the noon service for homemade Chicken Noodle soup, bread, desserts and coffee. Free will donation taken. Upcoming menu: 2/25—Potato Soup, 3/4—Fagioli Soup, 3/11—Pepper Soup. We hope you’ll join us!



PRAYER SPACE- MANDALAS— On Wednesday evenings in Lent, you are invited to the parlor for a creative and hands-on time of prayer before the 7 p.m. midweek worship service. At 6 p.m. each week, Pastor Amanda will introduce how to use *mandalas* as a spiritual practice. A mandala is a circle reflecting wholeness, and we will gather for a time of reflection, prayer, and creating. You may color or create your own mandala or just stop by for a space to wait and pray. All are welcome.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE—All *Grace for Today* articles for the **March** issue should be sent to Lynn Nattress at lnattress@gracewoodstock.org or to the church office by noon on **February 15**.

SENIOR LUNCHEON – Tuesday, February 24 If you've ever wondered where you may be living in ten years – please join us and gather some information on the various living arrangements available for Seniors. We have Beth Burg from Hearthstone Senior Living coming to tell us about the various types of Senior housing they offer right here in Woodstock, and Roger Oberman will be coming to share a home based living arrangement he discovered that was a perfect choice for his father. Our meal begins with Cheese & Crackers, followed by a Jambalaya Casserole, Fresh Fruit platter, Rye Bread & Strawberry Surprise Cupcake for dessert. Cost is only \$5.00, so bring a friend. Please sign up in the Activity Binder by **February 22** Questions, call Shirley Busse at 815-338-9063



WINTER WONDERLAND FUNDRAISER EVENT—Join us **Feb 27**, from 5—7:30 pm for this fun inter-generational event! Great prize raffles for the adults, games and prizes for the younger crowd, and a yummy mostaccoli dinner for everyone to share! All proceeds benefit the Grace Lutheran Preschool Program and the Tuition Assistance Program. Both dinner tickets and raffle tickets are available between Worship Services on Sundays, February 8, 15 & 22. For more information contact Mrs. Chris at clearman@gracewoodstock.org, or 815-338-0554 x213. We are also in need of volunteers to help run games in the gym. Many volunteers are needed to help out little ones. Thank you in advance!

CAREGIVER COUNSELING AND RESPITE CARE SUPPORT PROGRAM—Offered by Family Alliance of Woodstock and Huntley. Learn about: health risks to the caregiver, such as loneliness, stress and isolation; mindful practices and how to incorporate them into a daily routine; educational events and support groups. Adult daycare provided by Family Alliance while the caregiver attends. Call 815-338-3590 for dates and times. Find additional information online at www.familyallianceinc.org.

2015 BULLETIN & PRESENCE LIGHT SPONSOR SHEETS are available at the Information Center. A month prior to your sponsoring, a form will be sent to you requesting information and a donation of \$20 for the Bulletins & \$10 for the Presence Light. Thank you for helping fund the weekly bulletins and presence lights.



PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION — Spread the word...registration for the 2015-2016 school year is open! Our ELEA accredited Preschool is open to children 2—5 years in age. Please contact the Preschool Director, Chris Learman at 815-338-0554, ext. 213, with any questions, or to schedule a tour of the preschool classrooms and meet the teachers. Information and Registration is available online at www.gracewoodstock.org.

FUNERAL PLANNING— Do you have favorite scripture passages and/or hymns? Is there something you hope to have included in your funeral service? At the last senior luncheon, Pastor Ken, Pastor Amanda, and Ron Fredriksen shared about the history of Christian funerals and discussed how to plan and prepare for your funeral service. We have a simple worksheet where you can note your favorite scripture, hymns, and other details, and we invite everyone to fill one out to share with your family and bring to the church office so we can file it away, and at some point know how to best honor your wishes. Please stop by the church office to pick up a Funeral Planning Worksheet, or you can find a copy on Grace's website under "Communication & Documents," and then "Forms and Documents." Thanks be to God, that even in the face of death, we proclaim the promise of the resurrection.




CHURCH CLOSINGS AND EVENT CANCELLATIONS - When severe weather arrives, Grace Lutheran Church will follow D200 closing and cancellations. All weekday activities, including preschool, will be cancelled if D200 has cancelled classes. Please check the [Emergency Closing Center website](#) or any of the radio stations listed on the [D200 website](#) for any severe weather cancellations.

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER CHANGE—Grace for Today will be coming out on a monthly basis beginning in March 2015. This will help defer costs in postage and paper. We will utilize our Grace Constant Contact for additional announcements. If we don't already have a current email address on file or you are not receiving Constant Contact notices, please let the church office know and we will make sure that you do. Due to the distribution of one newsletter per month, the submission date for all information is due by the 15th of the prior month and should be sent to Lynn Nattress at lnattress@gracewoodstock.org. For example; the information that you want published in the March Grace for Today is due February 15. This issue is our last bi-weekly newsletter. If you have any questions please call the office at 815-338-0554.

SUNDAY MORNING SWEET TREATS—Many of you enjoy a sweet treat with your lemonade or coffee on Sunday morning during fellowship between services. To keep this available, we are asking families, individuals, committees, groups, teams, classrooms, etc. to participate in providing a sweet treat for a Sunday of their choosing. Please provide approximately 50 sweet bites on a disposable platter, and have available on the coffee table in the narthex from 9:30 am—10:45 am. Any type of sweet will be enjoyed. (Coffee and lemonade will be provided as usual) Please sign-up on the Activity Board. Dates start with March 1st. Thank you!



SPIRITUAL GROUNDING FOR LIFE AS A BAPTIZED CHRISTIAN - Save the date and plan to attend—The 2015 Northern Illinois Synod Congregational Resourcing Event (CRE) will be **March 14** at Kishwaukee College in Malta, IL. Keynote speaker will be Assistant to ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton/Executive for Administration, the Rev. Dr. Wyvetta Bullock. Watch for more information to come.

 **CHILI FEST & YOUTH AUCTION 2015—SAVE THE DATE: MARCH 15!** - Yep! It's that time of year again when Grace members vie for the title of Chili King (or Queen)! Bring your best pot of Chili on Sunday March 15 for this annual event and plan to stay for the Youth Auction to benefit Grace Youth! Proceeds from the day's events go toward the High School trip to the National Youth Gathering in Detroit in July and the Confirmation Class summer trip to Sky Ranch in Colorado! **Do you have items to donate for the Auction?** We are looking for donations of any kind: Baskets of goodies, sporting event tickets, timeshare vacations, works of art, donations of goods or services, gift certificates, etc. For more information or to add your items to our list, please contact Carrie Fiorina in the church office. Watch for additional information and a list of some of the great auction items in the next newsletter!

MARCH - WEEKENDERS EVENT—Join us at the Opera House for the play “The Drowsy Chaperone” – **Saturday March 21** at 8:00 PM. Our own Paul Lockwood is one of the actors. Let's support the Opera House and Paul! Tickets are \$23.00 in the A section, group rate possible with enough people signed-up. B section is \$18.00 each. We would like to block a section, so please sign-up as soon as possible. Let's meet at Stage Left at 7:00 pm for coffee or beverage of your choice before going to the play. There is a sign-up sheet and play description on the Activity Board. Any questions, call Martha Fleck – 815-451-6777.



STEPHEN MINISTRY - is a one-to-one lay caring ministry that takes place within the congregation. The ministry goal is to support the growth and health of the Congregation through use of Lay Leaders that are trained to care to hurting people in and around our congregation. People experiencing a difficult time in life, such as grief, divorce, job loss, chronic or terminal illness. In the past Grace has used this program (we are still enrolled) and we are now revitalizing it. Grace is looking for caring people that would be interested in becoming either Stephen Leaders or Stephen Ministers. The Leaders would be asked to attend a **Leaders Training Course** this spring (**April 12-18**) in St. Louis, MO. Following the leadership course, these leaders would bring their education back to Grace and this fall select and train the Stephen Ministers at Grace Lutheran for a 2 year term of service. If you are interested in learning more please contact Pastor Amanda, Pastor Ken, the church office or Claude Hutchens (claud3hutch@sbcglobal.net). The website www.stephenministries.org also has additional information.

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!	GRACE STAFF & COUNCIL
<p>Saturday, February 7 9:00 AM Band 5:00 PM Worship</p> <p>Sunday, February 8 8:30 AM Traditional Worship 9:15 AM Winter Wonderland Ticket Sales 9:30 AM Blood Pressure Checks 9:30 AM Sunday by Sunday Book Group 9:45 AM Education Hour 10:45 AM Contemporary Worship 11:45 AM Youthful Spirit & Laudate 12:05 PM Annual Meeting & Ministry Matters 6:15 PM Hand Chime Choir 6:45 PM Graceful Ringers</p> <p>Monday, February 9 9:00 AM Preschool 2s, 4s, 4s & 5s 6:30 PM Boy Scout Troop 153 6:45 PM Connections Class</p> <p>Tuesday, February 10 9:00 AM Preschool 2s, 3s, 4s & 5s</p> <p>Wednesday, February 11 9:00 AM Preschool 2s, 4s, 4s & 5s 12:30 PM Staff Meeting 5:00 PM Messengers 5:15 PM 2 Year Old Class 5:15 PM PrimeTime — Sloppy Joes 5:30 PM Cherubs 6:00 PM Confirmation 6:00 PM Revelation Ringers 6:00 PM Dixieland Band 6:15 PM Joyful Sound 6:30 PM Grace Dance 7:00 PM Chancel 7:00 PM Graceful Dance</p> <p>Thursday, February 12 9:00 AM Preschool 2s, 3s, 4s & 5s 12:00 PM Naomi Circle 6:30 PM BSA, Sycamore District</p> <p>Friday, February 13 9:00 AM Preschool 4s, 4s & 5s 11:15 AM Adoration</p>	<p>Saturday, February 14 3:45 PM Band 5:00 PM Worship 6:00 PM Fair Trade Coffee</p> <p>Sunday, February 15 8:30 AM Traditional Worship 9:15 AM Winter Wonderland Ticket Sales 9:30 AM Fair Trade Coffee 9:45 AM Education Hour/Sunday By Sunday 10:45 AM Contemporary Worship 5:15 PM Youthful Spirit 6:15 PM Hand Chime Choir 6:30 PM Laudate 6:45 PM Graceful Ringers</p> <p>Monday, February 16 President's Day / Church Office Closed 6:30 PM Boy Scout Troop 153 6:45 PM Connections Class 7:00 PM Faith Circle</p> <p>Tuesday, February 17 9:00 AM Preschool 2s, 3s, 4s & 5s 9:00 AM Sewing Circle 5:00 PM Exultation!</p> <p>Wednesday, February 18 9:00 AM Preschool 2s, 4s, 4s & 5s 12:00 PM Ash Wednesday Midday Service 1:00 PM Lenten Soup Lunch—Chicken Noodle 5:00 PM Messengers 5:15 PM 2 Year Old Class 5:15 PM PrimeTime — Spaghetti 5:30 PM Cherubs 6:00 PM Confirmation 6:00 PM Prayer Space—Mandalas 6:00 PM Revelation Ringers 6:15 PM Joyful Sound 6:30 PM Grace Dance 7:00 PM Ash Wednesday Evening Service 8:00 PM Chancel</p>	<p>Senior Pastor Rev. Kenneth D. Gibson <i>kgibson@gracewoodstock.org</i> Office Phone: 815-338-0554 Home Phone: 815-527-7215</p> <p>Associate Pastor Director of Senior High Ministries Rev. Amanda Bergstrom Cell Phone: 630-664-9016 <i>abergstrom@gracewoodstock.org</i></p> <p>Director of Communications Lynn Nattress <i>lnattress@gracewoodstock.org</i></p> <p>Director of Music Ministries Ron Fredriksen <i>rfredriksen@gracewoodstock.org</i></p> <p>Parish Musicians Terry Aavang, Jan Burns, Dale Carlson, Tammy Baier, Carrie Filetti</p> <p>Director of Preschool Ministry Chris Learman <i>clearman@gracewoodstock.org</i></p> <p>Preschool Staff Tammy Baier, Amy Flores, Julie LaGue, Nancy Mojica, Kristy Nellesen</p> <p>Director of Educational Ministries Office Assistant Carrie Fiorina <i>cfiorina@gracewoodstock.org</i></p> <p>Director of Senior Ministries Shirley Busse</p> <p>Secretary Denise Klabunde <i>dklabunde@gracewoodstock.org</i></p> <p>Building Supervisor/Ken Zank Custodians/Chris & Kim Ethridge</p> <p>Officers & Council Cathy Buhrow, Mike Freeman, Robin Gibbs, Ken Hansing, Claude Hutchens; Sue Olsen, Peter Paulson, Adele Petersen, Rob Ribbe, Beth Miller; Daniel Nattress <i>council@gracewoodstock.org</i> Office Hours: 8:30 am–3:30 pm, M–Th 8:30 am–12:00 pm, F</p>

