



**GRACE
LUTHERAN CHURCH**

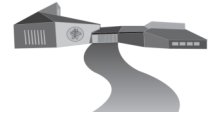
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Grace for Today

MARCH, 2016 • VOLUME 15, NO. 3

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN.....We ALL can give.....by Pastor Ken Gibson

He looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury; he also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. He said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them; for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on."



PREPARE THE WAY

What I want to share this month is the reality that we are still in the midst of a capital campaign and I want to encourage us to have as close to full participation as we are able. By "full participation" I am talking about having as many people as possible contribute to our Prepare the Way Capital Campaign. It is still my hope that we will have more persons contributing to the overall campaign. What I want to do is to try and encourage you to ALL consider being a part of this effort and I want to do so by telling you a true story about how important it is to have full participation in a capital effort.

While serving a small congregation in Rural Missouri, during my internship year of Seminary training years, the church I was serving needed a new air conditioning system. Now, for a small church, the expense would be a major cost to bear by the membership. As fate would have it, in the little congregation was a "Mrs. Walton." YES, one of those Walton's. A direct family member of the Sam Walton family in fact she was the widow of Sam's brother. Well, it did not take long for this very generous woman to find her way to my office and come forth and volunteer to pay for the entire cost of a new air conditioning system for the church. Now, first look, perhaps I should have just said; "Well thank you very much, you can make the check out to the church for "X" amount of dollars." But what I said was not that. I asked her to consider allowing others to give toward the effort as well. I tried to explain to her that all the members of this little congregation want to feel like they are a part of this church. All the members want to feel good about what they together are able to achieve. So then, I asked her to allow the council to set up a fund drive and allow for everyone to be a part of this effort in a sense of building up the faith community and congregational commitment to this special little church. At first she was taken aback. No one had ever refused her generosity in the past and for me to ask her to hold off on being generous was a bit of a gamble on my part. Thankfully, she agreed and we left it that she would be able to make up the difference "if" the effort fell short. It did not! In fact, that effort led to another effort for new pews and better furnishings in the little church. Mrs. Walton was free to be generous in both efforts, and she was such. But in truth the percentage of participation in those capital campaign efforts was nearly 100%! And the poor widows in that place also put in whatever they had, to be a part of the mission and ministry of that place.

So then perhaps you might wonder; "Where are we in our Grace Capital Campaign in regards to % of members giving towards our efforts?" Well, we are a long way from 100%. According to my calculations we are at around 27%. So far at least, less than one third of us have decided to contribute to this effort. The questions I have for us to ponder are these; "What % of us are driving on the new driveway? What % of us are benefitting from the new furnaces providing heating this winter which will cool us more efficiently next summer?" Furthermore, what of our other projects? "How many of us enjoy the expansiveness of the new Narthex flooring and the safety of the new stairwell flooring? How about the new sidewalks along the northwestern portion of our building which allow for safer access to our preschool by parents and for all who use our Luther Hall for events every year?" I realize only some are using the new loop hearing assistance system in our sanctuary but what a joy for those who are now able to hear more clearly.

There are more projects yet to be completed and much of those will depend on our continued commitment to this Grace church wide effort. "So then what Pastor Ken?" you might ask; So Then I say; "GIVE!" Give what you can, for I am convinced that we all desire for the success of this place now and for the future. Give because we are compelled to make sure that our commitment to this place is as strong now as it has been in years past, like when this facility was built. And Give because we believe in the promise of Christ for us all in this time and we believe in the promise of Christ for ALL those who will come after us. Give, and let's see how close to 100% participation we might achieve.

CONTINUING IN THE COVENANT OF BAPTISM—LENT MIDWEEK SERVICES— During the season of Lent, we will gather for midweek worship services and focus on how we continue in the covenant of baptism throughout our lives. Each week our worship service will focus on one part of the baptismal covenant in the worship setting of Evening Prayer, or Vespers. We invite you to look up the date of your baptism to add a note on a Grace baptismal calendar in the narthex, as a shared way of remembering our baptisms. If you are interested in being baptized, please talk with one of our pastors.

Wednesdays at Noon & 7 p.m.— (Soup lunches 12:30 p.m.; PrimeTime 5:15-6:30 p.m.)

March 2- to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, **March 9-** to serve all people, following the example of Jesus, **March 16-** to strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

We hope you will join us in worship each Wednesday as a part of your Lenten discipline and spiritual practices.

OPENING THE BOOK OF FAITH AFTERNOON BIBLE STUDY—All are welcome to a drop in bible study. Pastor Ken will be leading the group in Lutheran insights for the bible. Classes meet weekly from 1pm-2pm. Check church calendar for upcoming dates.

FIRST COMMUNION CLASS—First Communion will be on Palm Sunday, **March 20**, at the 8:30 a.m. service. Preparation class/ luncheon held on Saturday, **March 19**, from 11am to 1 p.m. Please sign up in the black activity binder at the Information Center by Sunday, **March 6**. Questions: Carrie Fiorina in the church office.

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION— Grace is hosting a new member orientation on Sunday **March 6, 2016** at 9:45 a.m. in the parlor, with a light breakfast. Those that would like to become members of Grace or get more information on what it means to be a member of the family here at Grace, please sign up at the Information Center in the activity binder or call the church office, 815-338-0554.

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, Tyler Stiemke serving in the military

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

Health Concerns: Bill Botts, Bob Clemons (friend of Cathy Meyer), Cary Crisp (friend of Lynn Nattress), Jim Davis, Nancy Davis, Ken DeVogelaere, Marge Dierksen, Clark Drennen (cousin of Bill Fleck), Betty Dusthimer (sister of Diane Thurow), Amy Ferraro Heinzinger (friend of Paul Lockwood), Sophie Frazier (great grand niece of Ila Randolph), Maroulla Hahne (friend of Bill & Martha Fleck), Judy Hansen (sister of June Pienschke), Patrice Hoover, Mary Hurst (friend of Deborrah Evanoff), Christina Jaggi (friend of Adele Petersen), Fila Johnson (sister-in-law to Roberta Herzog), John Johnson (brother of Jerry Johnson), the Kamps family, Jonathan Koehn (son of Ron & Mary Koehn), Diane Knowles, Philip Kreznor, Vincent Lopez (father of Tom Lopez), Gail Mueller, Jesse Myjak, Roberta Nielsen, Don Nusbaum, Carol O'Brien (sister of Bill Larsen), Gloria Ogle, Arne Olson, Alice Pate, Ferd Raffel, Shawn Rank (son of Bert & Carol Rank), Joan Russell (mother of Sheri Conover), Stanley Russell (father of Sheri Conover), Dick Schroeder, Ellen Schulz (daughter-in-law of Diane Schulz), Eleanor Setser, John Sorensen, Sharon Stahlecker, Suzanne Stumpff, Samuel Sweeney (nephew of Melissa McMahan), Josh Tillman, Brian Tobin (grandson of Enn Teetsov), Lauryn Trede (granddaughter of Pat Cervantes), Bob Unglaube, Eileen Weide, Karen Wells, Lois Wiecek, Jeannie Wilcox, Janet Worley, Robert Worley (cousins of Diane Baker-Lockwood), Ruth Zirves

Sorrows: Howard Mansfield (brother of Pat Cervantes), Duane Muehler, Betty Anderson, John Schultz (friend of Bill & Martha Fleck), Olga Grasser

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.

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REMEMBERING & CONTINUING IN BAPTISM.....by Pastor Amanda Bergstrom

The focus for our midweek worship services this Lent is “Continuing in the Covenant of Baptism,” as we focus on different parts of the baptismal covenant. The baptismal font is now placed beside the paschal candle as a visible reminder during worship, the old baptismal font stands in the center of the narthex to greet all who pass by, and there is a baptismal calendar spanning a wall in the narthex as well. This Lent, we are encouraged to remember and continue in our baptismal call.

If you have not yet had a chance to add your name to the baptismal calendar, we invite you to do so. Here are a few helpful notes in case you have not already heard us share: Baptism is baptism, so whether you were baptized here, at another church, in a river, lake, kitchen sink, or NICU, baptism is baptism. If you were baptized at Grace or had membership records transferred here, you can call Denise in the office (815-338-0554) and she can look up your baptismal date for you. We have also heard that ancestry.com has uploaded ELCA baptismal records, if that is a site you use. If you know you were baptized but cannot find the date, still add your name to the calendar (you can pick a month you like and add your name there). And finally, if you would like to be baptized, please talk with one of your pastors, we would love to talk with you about the gift and promise of baptism.

It has been a joyful time to see people come forward to remember their baptism and add their name to the calendar. Many people initially have no idea when or where they were baptized, some have looked up the date and brought it in to write on the wall, others have carried their mementos and certificates in from years ago, to remember their baptism and add their name and date to the wall.

I pray that this may be a meaningful activity for you in this season of Lent. Blessings on your researching and remembering, may you know that the waters of baptism and the words that are spoken hold true for you: you are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; and “child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.”

EASTER DECORATIONS—Order forms for plants to help decorate our worship area for Easter Sunday can be found at the Sign-Up desk or in your service folders. The deadline for the \$13.00 donation is **March 14**.

MUSIC4MARTIN 2016—Come to Grace Lutheran Sunday **March 6**, at 3:30 and help us celebrate the life and teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. There will be spoken word, song and dance, all performed by a multi-age troupe of community members. Come support our local youth’s efforts and talents!

LENTEN CONCERT—The adult choirs of Grace and St. Mary combine to bring you an afternoon of Lenten music and readings on Sunday **March 13** at 3:30 pm at Grace. Hear beautiful, uplifting choir anthems, words inspired by scripture, and join in singing hymns that touch the soul as we together prepare to enter Holy Week, the most sacred time of the church year for Christians. Free will offering to support the Woodstock Area Community Ministries. All are welcome to this free event.

THANK YOU—Dear Pastors Ken and Amanda and Grace Church Family—With thanks and gratitude for all your love, support and prayers over the last four years for Larry and me during our health struggles. My leg is now healed and I had a very successful hip replacement in 2015. It is with mixed sorrow and joy that God chose for Larry to heal in heaven. I am thankful that he is now free of all his pain, physical struggles and worries. I am comforted that it was God’s will and His plan. I am so grateful for my wonderful Grace family.
Love and blessings—Dee Bohn

HELP! HELP WANTED—Meals On Wheels needs a volunteer to deliver meals to our homebound. The routes are composed of 2 volunteers-youhave a partner. The commitment is on Friday, every five weeks, from 10:45—12:00. We have 16 volunteers from Grace and we could use you! Questions: Jeannine May 815-943-4849 or 815-382-1897.

SUNDAY MORNING ADULT EDUCATION —All are welcome to join us from 9:45-10:30 in Luther Hall for our series Realizing The Social Truths In Our Community—**March 6**— Northern Illinois Special Recreation Assoc. **March 13**—Home of the Sparrow, **March 20**— Woodstock District 200, **March 27** – no class

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE—The deadline for the April newsletter is March 15. Send articles to Lynn Nattress at lnattress@gracewoodstock.org, or the church office. Questions: Office at 815-338-0554.

Here is your link to the Weekend Worship Participants:

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

**PREPARE THE WAY
CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE**

Committed—\$483,456.06

Received—\$355,380.88

Goal—\$780,430.00

UPDATED PHONE AND ADDRESSES—

Please contact the church office if your contact information has changed, or you no longer have/use a landline phone. Thank you!

UPCOMING EDUCATION DATES:

Adult Education—Sundays at 9:45 am

Adult Bus Trip—March 13

First Communion Class—March 19

VBS—July 18-22

**2016 BULLETIN AND
PRESENCE LIGHT SPONSORS NEEDED**

Sign-up is 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.

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

Lenten Service Schedule

Wednesdays at Noon & 7 p.m.

March 2- to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,

March 9- to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,

March 16- to strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION—

March 6 is the next New Member Orientation Breakfast. We have a light breakfast for those that would like to become members, and those wanting more information on what it means to be a member of the Grace family. Please contact the church office if you are interested in becoming a new member.



GRACE STAFF & COUNCIL

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Custodians/Chris & Kim Ethridge

Officers & Council

Cathy Buhrow, Mike Freeman, Robin Gibbs,

Ken Hansing, Claude Hutchens; Sue Olsen,

Peter Paulson, Adele Petersen, Rob Ribbe,

Beth Miller; Daniel Nattress

council@gracewoodstock.org

Office Hours: 8:30 am–3:30 pm, M–Th

8:30 am–12:00 pm, F