



**GRACE**  
**LUTHERAN CHURCH**

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# Grace *for* Today

MARCH, 2017 • VOLUME 16, NO. 3

**TIME KEEPS ON KEEPING ON. REFORMING THE CHURCH ALWAYS!!.....by Pastor Ken Gibson**

As I pen this month's GFT article, I am realizing that as of yesterday I am starting my 9th year here at Grace. It was at the beginning of lent nine years ago that I recall my start day and how excited I was. Oh how I so wanted to get started with all that our time together might offer in Christ. Nine years may seem like a long time but in a congregation of over a hundred plus years of tradition, and when we think of the Reformation movement, now 500 years and counting, my tenure is but a small space on the Grace Ministry time line. None the less, I can look back at some wonderful years of ministry and life together. These days I am a bit nostalgic, more and more so it seems, and as I do grow older, I realize it is good to look back and reflect in regards to the life together.

My truthful reflection of these years must admit that there have been some real life moments of trial for me and some pain that my own life events have caused the congregation and for that pain I am truly sorry. Yet, I also know that through these moments I have been able to experience what being in a community of faith means for us all in ways of support and love for each other in such times. So let me say first off; "Thank you" so very much. I have felt your love and for that I am most appreciative. And I hope that you too have felt my love for all of you.

Part of spending time in reflection bids us, really, to ponder what is ahead? What might be the next events in our life together in faith and in ministry and mission? The statement; "God only knows" may be a truth, yet I do also believe that we help make our life together by the things/ministries in which we commit, and the ways in which we share God's Grace with each other, this community, the Church at large, and God's world. I realize, that like in the last nine years, there will be joys and there will be sorrows. There will be new life as we welcome new people of faith to our community and there will be sadness as we say good bye to some of our sisters and brothers of faith from this community. In short, it will be much like it has been for over a 500 years as a church of the reformation and a hundred years as Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Woodstock. Just as we sing in Hymn #729 in our ELW:

The Church of Christ, in Every Age

vs 1           The church of Christ, in every age beset by change, but Spirit led,  
                  must claim and test its heritage and keep on rising from the dead.

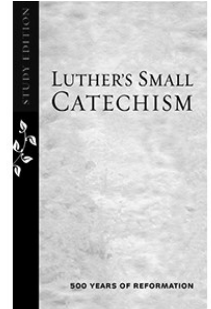
vs 5           We have no mission but to serve in full obedience to our Lord;  
                  to care for all, without reserve, and spread his liberating word.

May the Lenten time of which we now enter be filled with the wonder and the joy that is our life together in Christ and may we all commit to the wonder and work that is the Reformation. For you see the church is, as Luther reminds us, "Sempra Reformanda" or Always Reforming!



**SENIOR LUNCH-** Senior Luncheon - **March 28** – “Our library, Woodstock’s best kept secret” Come and learn about all the library has to offer you. Nick Weber, Woodstock’s Library Director will be coming to update us all. Our menu begins with assorted cheese & crackers, followed by oven baked fish & chips, bacon brussel sprouts, squash, and chocolate whipped cream cake for dessert. The cost is only \$5, so bring a friend! Please sign up in the Activity Binder by March 26. Questions, call Shirley Busse at 815-338-9063

**LUTHER SMALL CATECHISMS WANTED-** As we Celebrate the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation, we honor Luther’s Small Catechism. Do you remember holding tight to your small catechism all the while trying to memorize the answers to the question; **“What does this mean?”** Well, it’s time to dust off those little gems and help us present a **“Reformation 500”** display throughout Lent in our narthex. We will focus on the Small Catechism which is what Luther called his greatest written offering. You can bring your small catechism to the church office and we will make sure that your **SC** is returned to you. Make plans to attend this year’s special Lenten services that will highlight Luther’s Small Catechism at Noon and 7PM every Wednesday during Lent. There will be a soup luncheon following the noon offering each week. Finally, drop in on the adult study between worship services conducted by Pastor Ken, which will also focus on the Small Catechism.



**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](mailto:dklabunde@gracewoodstock.org).*

**World:** Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, churchwide staff & their families, Bishop Jeff Clements, synod staff & their families, those serving in military conflicts, Arusha Town Lutheran Parish in Tanzania (our companion parish), Scott Bunch serving in the military, Lt. Thomas Stock serving in Africa (nephew of Tammy Hansing)

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

**Health Concerns:** Rev. Kenneth Ahlstrand, Lois Bloese, John Bloese, Dee Bohn, Ian Clark (uncle of Bill Fleck), Ken DeVogelaere, Patrice Dunn, Verna Eslick, Steve Figved (friend of Cathy Meyer), Tannie Fiorina (mother of John Fiorina), Cheryl Flemming (mother of Kristy Nellesen), Paul Gergolla (son-in-law of Eileen Weide), Robert Giron (brother of Patty Kozlow), Tamasa Gutierrez (mother of Patty Kozlow), Maroulla Hahne (friend of Martha & Bill Fleck), Devin Harms (friend of Joe Evanoff), Cindy Hertrampf (sister of Tammy Hansing), Chris Holmer, Mary Hurst (friend of Deborrah Evanoff), Dwight Jensen, the Kamps family, Diana King, Diane Knowles, Keith Kulpinski (friend of Spanbauers & Thurows), Colleen Kuraszek (friend of Adele Petersen), John Mahoney, Renee Merklin (friend of Rachel Bratanick), Tammy Millman (daughter of Karen Millman), Carl Neubaum (son of Donna Neubaum), Carol O'Brien (sister of Bill Larsen), Gloria Ogle, Sue Olsen, Arne Olson, Carol Rank, Shawn Rank (son of Bert & Carol Rank), Jean Reed (mother of Mary Hoyt), Joan Russell (mother of Sheri Conover), Stanley Russell (father of Sheri Conover), Dick Schroeder, Ellen Schulz (daughter-in-law of Diane Schulz), Bill Seger, Eleanor Setser, John Sorensen, Kathy Stone, Doris Sunday, Samuel Sweeney (nephew of Melissa McMahon), Ellie Mae Thompson (great niece of Gladys & Ken Renner), Josh Tillman, Brian Tobin (grandson of Enn Teetsov), Bob Unglaube, Bud Winter, Ruth Zirves

**Sorrows:** John Johnson (brother of Jerry Johnson), Paul Freier (grandfather of Pastor Amanda Bergstrom), Darlene Sarbaugh, Gary Fink

**Joys:** Baptism of Vivienne Kay O'Leary (daughter of Conor & Olivia O'Leary and the baptism of Micah Paul Bergstrom (son of Pastor Amanda & Jon Bergstrom)

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](mailto: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.

## LENT- WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?.....By Pastor Amanda

This year, Ash Wednesday falls on March 1st, and we will gather in worship (at noon & 7 p.m.) to remember that we are dust and to dust we shall return. On that day we enter into the church season of Lent, the time of remembering Jesus' passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed.

During this season we are invited into the discipline of Lent—self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love—strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament.

At Grace, we will also immerse ourselves in study of Luther's Small Catechism. You are invited to midweek worship services (Wednesdays at noon or 7 p.m.) and a small group study (Sundays at 9:45 a.m.) where we will focus on the gift of Luther's Small Catechism.

One of the framing questions for the Small Catechism is "What is This?" or "What Does This Mean?" As we study and worship as a community of faith, I invite you to ask this question throughout the season ahead.

What does Lent mean to you this year? What does the invitation to a Lenten discipline mean for your life the next 40 days? What does your faith mean? What is this? What does this mean?

Blessings on the questions you may pose in the weeks ahead.  
May God stir up in us a sense of holy wonder this Lent.



**SUNDAY BOOK CLUB – “My Journey to Heaven”** We will be starting this new book on **Sunday, March 26**. This true story is loaded with details of Marv Besteman's experience of heaven. If you are grieving the loss of a loved one, or even if you just wonder about what happens after we die, you'll enjoy this read. Join us as we read this story together and enjoy lively discussions and mouth-watering treats. We meet in Room 102 between services, come check us out, you'll be glad you did.

**LSSI OFFERS NEW THERAPEUTIC FOSTER CARE PROGRAM-** Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) is thrilled to announce a new child-focused, evidence-based Therapeutic Foster Care program in Chicago, Aurora, and Rockford. We are looking for skilled, dedicated adult(s) to provide care for 6–9 months for a child with challenging behavior. This program provides intensive 24/7 support, training and a highly effective treatment model. For more information contact: Rockford-Brittany Matz (815) 969-8836, ext. 5221; Aurora-Donna Gregory (630) 896-2714, ext. 34; Chicago-Kellye Norris, (312) 949-4843.

**LENTEN SOUP LUNCHESES-** Lenten Soup Lunches begin March 1 after our noon Lenten services. Each week we will offer a different, hearty homemade soup, fresh baked bread, assorted desserts and coffee/tea. The dates are **March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29; April 5 & 13, 2017**. We still are in need of some soup cooks. For more information or to sign up, please see the Activity Binder or call Shirley Busse at 815-338-9063.



**SAVE THE DATES-** Ash Wednesday **MAR 1**..... Lenten Soup Lunches starting **MAR 1**..... Small Catechism Class starts **MAR 5**..... CRE **MAR 11**..... Reformation 500 Bookstore **MAR 11-26**..... Blood Pressure Check **MAR 12**..... Music for Martin **MAR 12**..... McHenry County PADS **MAR 18**..... Thrivent Financial Retirement Workshop **MAR 21**..... Sunday Book Club **MAR 26**..... Senior Lunch **MAR 28**..... Thrivent Financial Retirement Workshop **MAR 30**..... First Communion Class **APR 1**..... Cubs Game Bus Trip **APR 9**..... Women of the ELCA Retreat **APR 22**..... VBS **JUL 17-21**..... Christmas in Lutherland **NOV 27**.....

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: **MONTHLY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**-The deadline for the April newsletter is March 15. Send articles to Tammy :  
: Baier at [tbaier@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:tbaier@gracewoodstock.org), or the church office. Questions: Call the office at 815-338-0554. :  
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**SAVE THE DATE FOR CRE-** Save the date! The 2017 Congregational Resourcing Event (CRE) will be held **Saturday, March 11** at Kishwaukee Community College in Malta, IL. This event will focus on the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Our Keynote Presenter will be the Rev. Dr. Winston Persaud from Wartburg Theological Seminary speaking on “Christian Witness in a Pluralistic World – Cross Cultural Challenges”. The day will start with worship, followed by the keynote address. After that you can choose from 40 workshops offerings covering all areas of congregational life. A printed copy of the workshops will be on the Activity Board along with a sign-up sheet for those interested in attending the CRE and possibly car-pooling. For additional information and to register, go to [nisynod.org](http://nisynod.org) and click on “Register now for the CRE”. Any questions, please talk with Pr. Ken, Pr. Amanda, or Mary Beth Martin-Bellavia.

**REFORMATION 500 BOOKSTORE-** The 500th anniversary of the Reformation is fast approaching! Do you want to learn more about Martin Luther, his writings, and their impact on Christianity? Do you want to reflect on the ongoing impact of the Reformation today? Stop by our Reformation 500 Bookstore to shop for engaging books on the Reformation for readers of all ages and interests! Save up to 50% plus receive free shipping on all Bookstore titles. Stop by the narthex **March 11-26** to get fascinating books on the Reformation for you and your family. Our Bookstore is sponsored by Augsburg Fortress, the publishing ministry of the ELCA. The books will include bestselling biographies like *Luther the Reformer* as well as an atlas of the European Reformations, a graphic novel for young readers, and primary sources from The Annotated Luther series.



**THRIVENT FINANCIAL PLANNING-** Thrivent will be hosting two retirement planning workshops here at Grace. The dates will be **March 21 at 10:00 a.m. and March 30 at 7:00p.m.** Mark the dates in your calendar and look for more information to come.

**FIRST COMMUNION CLASS-** Communion instruction for First Communion will be held on **April 1st at 11:00a.m.** Please sign up those children who are in First Grade or those who are older who have not received their first communion, in the activity binder at the welcome desk. The Rite of First Communion will be held on Sunday, April 9th at the 8:30 a.m. service. Questions contact Carrie Fiorina in the church office.



**CUBS GAMES BUS TRIP – Sunday, April 9 – 10:00am – 6:00pm.** We are heading up to Miller Park in Milwaukee after the early service to see a Cubs vs. Brewers Game. Miller Park has a retractable dome so we are guaranteed good weather. Miller Park also allows you to bring certain food and drink items into the park. Information sheets are available in the Activity Binder. Cost is \$90. Please pay when you sign up to guarantee your reservation. Questions, call Shirley Busse at 815-338-9063

**BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS-** Nancy Kreznor will be hosting our next blood pressure check on **March 12** between the 8:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. services. This is a free wellness service Nancy provides to our congregation.

**FUNERAL PLANNING**— Do you have favorite scripture passages and/or hymns? Is there something you hope to have included in 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.

**DIRECT THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS-** Eligible Thrivent Financial members who have available Choice Dollars® have until **March 31, 2017**, to direct them. Don’t miss this opportunity to recommend that Thrivent Financial provide outreach funding to Grace Lutheran Church. Go to [Thrivent.com/thriventchoice](http://Thrivent.com/thriventchoice) to learn more. Or call 800-847-4836 and say “Thrivent Choice” after the prompt.

**SMALL CATECHIAM CLASS BEING OFFERED-** In the introduction to the New Study Edition of Luther's Small Catechism 500 Years of Reformation (copyright Augsburg Fortress 2016) our presiding Bishop writes the following;

*Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,*

*In this small book {Luther's Small Catechism} you have a rich treasure for communicating the faith from generation to generation. The Small Catechism gives us common language for engaging the Bible, talking with others about our relationships with God and neighbors, making sense of our callings in daily life, and making a witness to Christ in God's world.*

*The 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation in 2017 is an opportunity to join your sisters and brothers in the ELCA in a yearlong emphasis on reading and studying the Small Catechism Together. I invite you to open, rediscover, and be renewed by this treasure again.*

With the above in mind and in keeping with my own personal desire to truly celebrate this anniversary year. I will be offering a class starting with the first Sunday in Lent and continuing on until we seem to come to a time of ending, (most likely early summer time) a study of Luther's small catechism. This class is for long time Lutherans and new comers to the Lutheran tradition as well all are truly welcome. Please give some very serious thought about attending this study. The class will begin on **Sunday, March 5<sup>th</sup>** and we will be meeting somewhere here at Grace. Watch for details. I have texts for the class and I will also offer up some additional resources to assist us with this offering. For as Timothy J. Wengert, one writer in this study, puts it;

*The better we know the Small Catechism, the easier it will be able to understand and hear God's word in the readings and preaching.*

Here is the course Outline:

Week #1	Intro pages 1-14, LSC 500 years
Week #2	Ten Commandments pages 15-24
Week #3	The Apostles' Creed pages 25-31
Week #4	The Lord's Prayer pages 32-42
Week #5	Holy Baptism & Holy Communion pages 43-51
Week #6	Wrapping up-Blessings, Prayers & Reformation pages 53-FF

A sign-up sheet is in the activity folder. Sign up now and I will see you in class. PK

**WOMEN OF THE ELCA RETREAT**— The Spring Retreat for the Women of the ELCA will be held on **Saturday, April, 22** from 8:15am-3:00 pm. The theme of this year's retreat is 'Making a difference...leaving a legacy' and it will be held at Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center in Oregon, IL. The registration deadline is March 20. Register online at [nisynod.org/women](http://nisynod.org/women).

**LENTEN SOUP COOKS**— Lent arrives March 1st and there is a need for volunteers to make soup and/or desserts for our noon Lenten Soup Lunches. Please sign up today. Sheets with more information are in the Activity Binder or call Shirley Busse at 815-338-9063.

**MUSIC FOR MARTIN**— The annual Music for Martin honoring Martin Luther King Jr. will be here at Grace **March 12, at 3:30 p.m.** All are welcome to enjoy a concert and celebration of diversity and peace.

#### **PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION**—

Grace Lutheran Preschool has open registration for the **2017-2018 school year**. We have programs available for ages 2-5 years old ranging from 1 to 5 day programs. The non-refundable registration fee is \$50. Please help us spread the word. More preschool information can be found on our church website or by calling Chris Learman at 815-338-0554 ext. 213.



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— \$497,556.06  
Received— \$467,845.95  
Goal— \$780,430.00



#### Stephen Ministers

Share the warmth of God's love with those who need it most: the lonely, the depressed, the grieving. Is God calling you to reach out to those who are hurting?

Consider serving as a Stephen Minister. For more information, please contact Katy Sheridan or Pastor Ken

#### WACM COOKBOOKS

Would make a great Gift! They are available for sale at the Information Center. They are \$14.95 each and all proceeds go to support Woodstock Area Community Ministries.

#### UPDATED PHONE NUMBERS AND ADDRESSES

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

#### SUNDAY MORNING SWEET TREATS

Sundays are available immediately! Info/sign-up on the Activity Board. To volunteer for coffee set-up contact the office.

#### CHURCH CLOSINGS AND EVENT

**CANCELLATIONS** - When severe weather arrives, Grace Lutheran Church will follow D200 closing and cancellations. Please check the Emergency Closing Center website or any of the radio stations listed on the D200 website for any severe weather cancellations.

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



#### GRACE STAFF & COUNCIL

**Senior Pastor**/Rev. Kenneth D. Gibson  
[kgibson@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:kgibson@gracewoodstock.org)

Office Phone: 815-338-0554  
Home Phone: 815-527-7215

#### Associate Pastor

**Director of Senior High Ministries**

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**Director of Communications**

Tammy Baier - [tbaier@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:tbaier@gracewoodstock.org)

**Director of Music Ministries**

Ron Fredriksen  
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#### Parish Musicians

Terry Aavang, Jan Burns, Dale Carlson,  
Tammy Baier, Carrie Filetti

**Director of Preschool Ministry**

Chris Learman

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#### Preschool Staff

Tammy Baier, Melissa McMahon,  
Nancy Mojica, Erica Schwanke

**Director of Educational Ministries**

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**Director of Senior Ministries**

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**Secretary**—Denise Klabunde

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**Building Supervisor**/Ken Zank

**Custodians**/Chris & Kim Ethridge

#### Officers & Council

Andy Bellavia, Cathy Buhrow, Beth Miller,  
Rob Ribbe: Ryan Baier, Mike Freeman,  
Robin Gibbs, Ken Hansing, Gayle Hoch,  
Sue Olsen, Adele Petersen  
[council@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:council@gracewoodstock.org)

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