

GraceNotes

A SEASONAL PUBLICATION OF GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

WORSHIP & MUSIC

HOLY WEEK

From ashes to Easter
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New Life

...so we too might walk in newness of life. Romans 6:4b

Newness of life is something that we all long for. Paul's words from Romans might not be the way we would phrase it, but there is a deep yearning inside of us that this life was intended to be made whole. We experience pain and brokenness, and we see pain and brokenness.



As we move into the season of Lent and then to the Triduum and Easter itself, we are reminded that, not unlike the birth process, Christ's death brought us into new life. This was not without cost or consequence. God's purchase of us came at immense cost...however, the new life that we received is immeasurable.

I know you might be wondering what that life is like. If everything is new, why is there still pain? We experience this new life in Christ when we free ourselves from needing to prove ourselves against neighbor and society by constantly chasing after the world's definition of success. We experience this new life in Christ when, no longer afraid of death, we live fully for the other...whether they deserve it or not.

This life of freedom through cost and grace is the rhythm of this season...submerge yourself this year in Lent and Holy Week that this freedom might be more present to you.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Smuts". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Rev. Matthew A. Smuts, pastor



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COVER PHOTO

A promise of new life

Photo by Elizabeth Hood

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Me and We

by Vicar Nikoli Falenschek
Pastoral Intern

What do you love to do?

If you could quit your job or school,
what would you want to do?

This is a passion that you have been
given, a gift to be used and not thrust
aside in the rat race of the day-to-day.

We live in a world that demands much of us. Between maintaining relationships, work, school, exercise, and even just eating, little time remains to focus on our spiritual health. We are all spiritual beings—that is, our spiritual relationship with God and everything around us is just as important to our overall health as, say, physical or mental fitness. But, finding the time and even discerning the what/how can be intimidating or seemingly impossible. Below, you'll find some [hopefully] helpful ways to discern how to engage your own spirituality. Please feel free to email Vicar Nikoli (vicarnikoli@gracepa.org) with what you like to do to engage your spiritual self! I would love to know what works for you!!

BEING CREATIVE

I've heard once that calling, in a vocational sense, might be defined as the intersection of our passions, skills, and gifts with the needs of the world. Some of us might be called to be teachers, CEOs, pastors, parents, sons or daughters, or whatever else you can think of. But, even after we've discerned our vocational calling, however much we might continue to relate in our minds how our career intersects with the needs of God's world, our spiritual lives must be further stimulated. Going to church and going to work, even going to school, will not do enough to fill us up spiritually, to develop our understanding of God and our place in creation.

This is where we are called to become creative. We must be imaginative in how we find time and energy to devote to spiritual practice. We must identify the holes in our

lives, look deeply into voids that we know are there, but don't know why. With the impossibilities that come with a full schedule, we are called to make time for God and ourselves—we are called to make time for this relationship.

PERSONAL VS. COMMUNAL

For some people, spiritual practices are most potent and formational in isolation—to “get away from it all,” to find ways to step back in order to find perspective, to lose oneself in a project. The quiet and stillness of contemplative spiritual practice is quite appealing for some people, and is healthy for making time to simply be with God.

For other people, God is most easily found in the hustle and bustle of a crowd, in the wonderful diversity that makes creation so excitingly new every day. The unlimited number of stories behind an equal number of faces delights and fills with hope all those who know the power of working together.

But, whichever of these two avenues appeal most to you, both are important to the maintenance and development of a spiritual self. Even Jesus went away from the crowds and disciples to pray, and we hear that God was not in the earthquake or the fire, but in the stillness; but the scriptures also point to a God among the people, most notably the Immanuel, God among us, even in Acts when the Holy Spirit as a violent wind rushed among the crowds. I encourage you, as this season begins, to find one of each to pursue, to get excited about.

PERSONAL PRACTICE

Personal spiritual practices range from meditation to writing, woodworking to volunteering, reading to exercising. Do you make time to do what you love? The answer is usually “no” or “not nearly enough.” If there is a part of you that longs to be by yourself, even a small part, in order to do something, that is not just an annoying gnat in your ear—it is a calling. Identify what that something is,

and explore ways in which you might fulfill that inner calling. It's hard to find the time, so pencil it into your calendar. Even once a month can be fulfilling.

Once you have identified what your personal practice will be, and have penciled it into your calendar, use that time to lose yourself in the work, in the act, in the whatever. Think about God, say a prayer of thanks for this gift, find ways that you might share your process or product with someone else. Let people know that you possess this passion, that you are using these skills instead of letting them waste away. Show people how you've begun using what you have to the glory of God and God's creation.

Here is a short list of personal spiritual practices that some people use regularly:

Writing poetry, novels, or journals

Prayer—sometimes simply reading the names out of the bulletin's prayer list can become a meaningful event, just get creative with what constitutes prayer

Reading—it doesn't have to be scripture, but whatever it is, think about how the story, characters, plot, or content fit into your understanding of the world and our relationship with God

Art—if you're crafty or artsy, find an outlet for your ideas, and be patient as you find a hobby that fits into your budget and schedule

COMMUNAL PARTICIPATION

Finding ways to develop spiritually while in community is very important. God becomes human in Jesus Christ not only to become you, your sufferings, and triumphs, but also that of your neighbor. We certainly cannot disconnect spiritual engagement from social interaction. For some people, community events are nerve-racking and anxiety-producing—as an introvert, I too experience

this. But, we are called to love and learn from our neighbors, our sisters and brothers in Christ.

Here are a few ways in which you might plug in to communal spiritual development:

Adult Faith Groups (like the ones on Wednesday nights at Grace!)—gathering, even for an hour or so, to talk about a pre-established topic really facilitates an opportunity to learn from others, and also to teach others

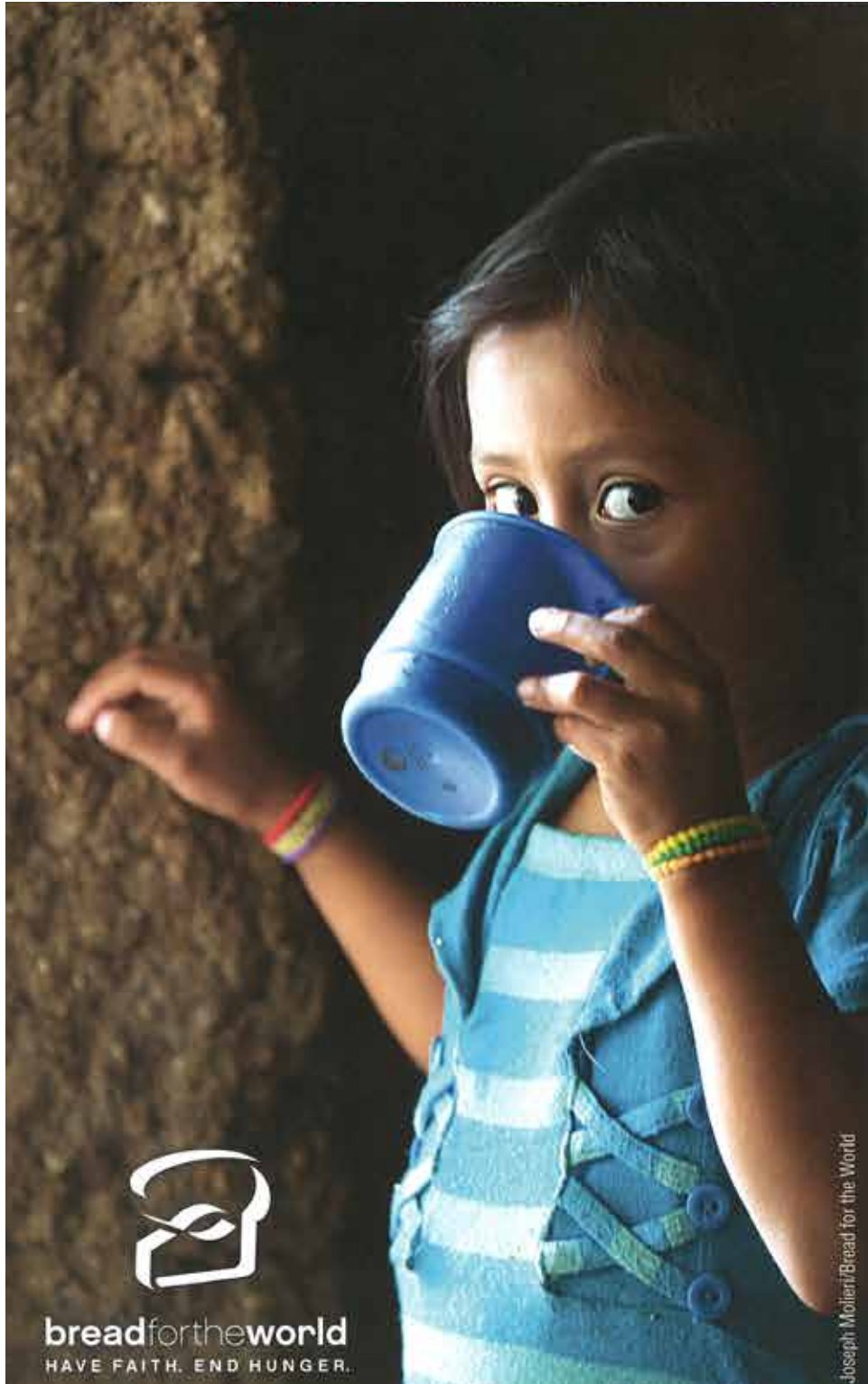
Bible Studies—join others in intentional community in order to explore Scripture together because “where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them” (Matthew 18:20)

Worship—we gather to remember and celebrate God's eternal promises made to all creation, and to meet Christ truly present at the Lord's Supper in the bread and wine

Service Projects—what better way to live out Christ's calling to love our neighbor than to volunteer, to get to know a stranger's story, to fill a need with a loving heart.

Getting to Know the Vicar

I've been here for six months already! I've loved getting to know all of you as much as I have. Given that I only have six months more here in Palo Alto, I want to make sure that I get to know you as well as I can! Please send me an email or stop by my office if you'd like to get some coffee or something. I'd love to chat!!



Bread for the World Seeks to End Hunger

by Bob Northcott

Bread for the World is a collective Christian voice urging our nation's decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad. The organization is entering its fortieth anniversary year and sees many challenges in the years ahead.

President Emeritus Arthur Simon writes "We could end hunger in our own country within a decade, and help to end most hunger worldwide within a generation. This past decade more people have been liberated from extreme poverty than in any other decade in history. This is the work of God, and we are privileged to serve in that work."

Plans for the next three years include gaining key victories against hunger, building a stronger grassroots network in every congressional district, and enlisting another 10,000 members. This year, Bread for the World's Offering of Letters seeks to (1) keep our global food aid program fully funded (it's a lifesaver each year for millions who are victims of natural disaster or violence) and (2) buy more food aid near where it is needed. This would enlarge the amount of food, get it there faster, and stimulate local farmers to increase production.

The United States is a leader in providing life-saving assistance overseas in the form of food aid in times of disaster and in long-term economic development. There is an opportunity in 2014 to reform the federal government's food-aid programs so that funds are used more effectively and efficiently. We should urge Congress to make changes that would allow food aid to benefit 17 million more people each year—at no additional cost to U.S. taxpayers.

What is U.S. food aid? Staple food items are distributed to survivors of disaster or used to support economic development in poor countries. These items include flour, rice, peas, beans, vegetable oil, powdered milk, and lentils.

What countries are the top recipients? The United States supplies about 60 percent of the total world contributions. Since 1961, it has helped 3 billion people in 150 countries in Europe, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa. The top recipients of emergency aid and development food aid were in Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, and Chad. In Latin American, the top recipients were Haiti, Columbia, Guatemala, Mexico, and Honduras.

How will food aid help farmers in Africa and elsewhere? The current practice of selling American-grown food on the open market in a developing country has been shown to sometimes undermine the livelihoods and productivity of local farmers by depressing prices in the market. Reforms such as increasing the use of local and regional purchases will support local small-holder farmers who are often women. This will also save money on shipping and time on delivery.

You can help Bread for the World reach these goals in a number of ways:

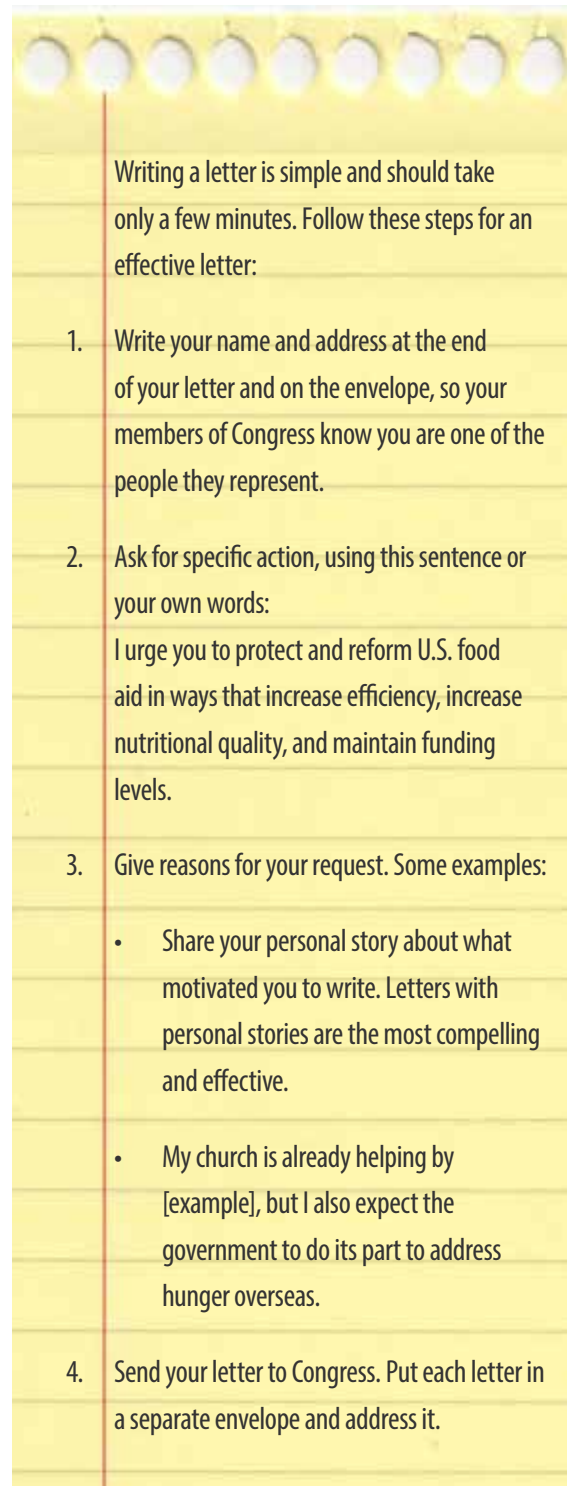
- write a letter to Congress expressing your views (on Sunday, March 2 there will be tables and materials set up)
- make a direct contribution to Bread for the World, 425 3rd St. SW Suite 1200, Washington, DC 20024
- pray for the end to hunger here and throughout the world.

You don't have to wait for the official letter writing project at church. Here are the addresses of your representatives:

Rep Anna Eshoo
698 Emerson St.
Palo Alto, CA 94301

Sen. Barbara Boxer
70 Washington St., Suite 203
Oakland, CA 94607

Sen. Diane Feinstein
One Post St., Suite 245
San Francisco, CA 94104



Opportunities to Serve

EHP

In the fall, we tried volunteering once a month at the Ecumenical Hunger Program, and it was wonderful! At the request of EHP's staff, we're going to move to a once-a-quarter volunteer slot, instead of monthly. So, come on over on March 16 to EHP and volunteer from 1-3 pm! We'll be assembling food boxes, sorting clothes, and tending the grounds!! All ages are welcome—kids must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Wear close-toed shoes!

BLOOD DRIVE

Our blood drive on February 9 was very successful! We had a grand total of 16 registrants and 13 full donations. Thank you to everyone who participated! We look forward to doing another drive some time in the future.

FOOD DRIVE

There has always been a box in the narthex that is intended to be filled with canned goods. In Lent, we are challenging the Grace Lutheran community to bring in 300 items over the course of Lent. Bring these items either on Sunday morning or Wednesday evening, and watch the thermometer in the narthex grow and grow! If everyone brings at least one item, we will be most of the way there!!

Contact Vicar Nikoli (vicarnikoli@gracepa.org) for more information on any of these opportunities.

Surprise!

There are often surprises for us at the South Palo Alto Food Closet—from the foods that come in that we've never heard of (some with labels we can't read—or no label at all) to the folks who come by who may have heard that we give out food, some who are desperate, and some who offer boxes of home grown produce. At each board meeting, there is usually a surprise about individuals or companies who have decided we are worth supporting at a substantial level. It is usually a good surprise. Even when there are desperate folks, we feel happy when we can at least be of some level of help. But at Grace, it is no longer a surprise that we find the yellow box full—often! It gives us great satisfaction to haul the food; we like to fill the car trunk! It is because our members care about sharing this way that we have plenty to do.



SOUTH PALO ALTO food closet

670 East Meadow Drive | open Monday, Wednesday-Friday, 10 - 2

Our suggested list this month still has oil, jams and jellies, condiments, and cereals, but we can add canned peas, Spam and other canned meats, and tomato sauces to the list. Single portion flip top meals in a can and other single portion items go to the homeless. Our fresh chicken and ground beef, as well as some of our produce, is what we buy with the checks we get—just as important as the yellow box! Thank you!

Leading and Singing

by Tim Getz

People are often surprised to learn that the concept of volunteer-only choirs in churches is of relatively recent vintage. The ancient chants of the church that developed in the Middle Ages were sung almost exclusively by clergy and monastics. A tradition of choirs of men and boys evolved throughout Europe as music became more complex. Boys sang in choirs as part of their schooling and so were paid with room, board, and an education (a rare and valuable opportunity in those days). The adult men who sang the alto, tenor, and bass parts were university students who received the same, and sometimes cash stipends as well. Choirs were present primarily in cathedrals, colleges, and royal courts, rarely in local parish churches. The great works of choral literature, including Purcell's anthems, Bach's cantatas, and Mozart's masses, were all written for this type of choir. Handel's oratorios, including his famous *Messiah*, were conceived as works for the theater and were sung by professional opera singers.



The tradition of a paid choir continued in early America. A number of large urban churches were built in the eastern United States in the nineteenth century with exactly four seats in the choir loft—enough for a paid quartet, and no more! On the frontier, naturally, choirs were virtually nonexistent. Many historians credit the Lutheran colleges, particularly St. Olaf, with the spread of popularity of amateur choirs in congregations. Indeed, in its early years, part of the mission of the St. Olaf Choir was to sing regular Sunday services at St. John's Lutheran Church in Northfield. As the college choral tradition spread to other campuses, and as Lutheran college alumni began filling pews by the hundreds and thousands, congregations formed volunteer choirs in imitation of their fondly-remembered college experiences.

Amateurs can and should sing great church music, but they sometimes need support. Many congregations pay a quartet of singers as "section leaders" to assist their volunteer choir. The paid quartet can be valuable in a number of ways: when the choir is small, the section leaders provide a degree of dependability—we can be assured that there will be at least one strong singer on each voice part (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass) every Sunday. The quartet can sing alone at services where the full choir does not sing. They can sing solo literature on occasion and assist in leading congregational singing. Paid singers are expected to be excellent music readers. Whereas in many volunteer choirs countless rehearsal hours must be spent rehearsing the basics of pitch and rhythm, a choir with section leaders is usually able to learn a lot of music in a short time by following their example.

For many years at Grace, we have employed one staff singer. Mark Tendall's rich baritone voice has anchored our bass section, and his beautiful singing and winsome personality have enriched our congregation in countless ways. This year, utilizing funds previously collected for a dedicated musical purpose, we have decided to add a professional soprano to our choir. Angelique Zuluaga will be joining us in March. I think you'll notice the positive change in sound immediately! Please welcome Angelique and her family to Grace. In order to ensure that this music fund can continue to be a resource in the future, watch for news about a special fundraising concert later this spring! The choir and other musical friends from our community will be invited to perform. We hope you'll join us and be generous in helping us continue to build on our long and fine tradition of great music at Grace!

Capital Campaign

by Aarika Riddle

The Listening Phase is coming to a close and we appreciate your involvement during this critical time. The goals of the Listening Phase have been to discern the congregation's vision for ministry, determine how this is connected to the hopes and dreams for additional resource needs, gauge the member's level of willingness to engage and support the mission, assess their understanding of the resource needs, and gather the necessary input and data to develop an effective way forward for the appeal process.

Sincere thanks to those who took time out of their schedules and participated in the Church Assessment Tool (CAT) survey. We received a total of 158 completed surveys! Kristin Wiersma, our Kairos consultant, was at Grace in January to conduct individual and focus group interviews with a sampling of the membership. She met with 84 people in these two formats. Her visit culminated in a Leadership Summit during which she met with the capital campaign team, church council, committees, and staff.

We are excited to receive Kristin's recommendations and look forward to sharing those with you soon. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to any member of the Capital Campaign Team.

Peace,

Aarika Riddle, Chair

Timo Ahonen	Julie Buckley
Mark Cravens	Elizabeth Katz
Andrew Mellows	Don Ostrus
Erik Rausch	Mary Schlatter
Don Zepp	Pastor Matt Smuts

Different Approaches to the Endowment

by Martha Meyer

Usually, members are encouraged to make gifts to an endowment fund through their estate plan—a will, a trust, an insurance policy, a home, or other real property. But two of Grace's



members, Kathy and Bruce FitzGerald, have another method of gifting to Grace's endowment fund, the Heritage Fund. They pledge a gift of cash over three years. As Bruce says, "We give now so we can see the impact of our gift."

Kathy and Bruce commit part of their tithe to Grace to the annual budget, but within the tithe there is room for a pledge to the Heritage Fund, the permanent fund of Grace Lutheran Church.

The Endowment Fund has reached \$123,915. It is invested directly with the ELCA Endowment Fund.

A percentage of the Heritage Fund interest is given to special requests that are not covered by the church budget. This year those gifts are designated to these areas, which have been requested by the Social Ministry Committee and the Children, Youth and Family Committee.

- Fistula Foundation \$450
- Bay Area Anti-Trafficking Coalition (BAATC) \$500
- Computer for tracking survivors of prostitution (BAATC) \$500
- Scholarship for student in Diyar Academy in Bethlehem \$450
- Funds for the South Palo Alto Food Closet \$500
- Mosquito netting to prevent malaria in African children \$500

Bruce and Kathy encourage members to "Donate later or donate sooner: just do it." Our generosity today will mean that, in response to God's call, the ministries within and beyond our campus will be vital and strong a generation from now.

The current members of the Endowment Committee are Martha Meyer (Chair), Amrette Butler, Bob Kraus, Dan Logan, Don Ostrus, Pastor Cora Scheel, David Vroom, and Don Zepp, with Pastor Smuts as an ex-officio member and Julie Buckley as a council liaison. The committee meets six times a year.

Spiritual Formation and Adult Education

Lent is traditionally a time for spiritual reflection and growth, and many Christians take on a Lenten discipline to help deepen their faith journey in this season. The Adult Education and Spiritual Formation committee would like to highlight some of the many resources for spiritual growth right here at Grace. From Wednesday evening services and intergenerational activities, to participation in the food drive, to the Labyrinth and the library, there is something or some way for each of us to renew and deepen our commitment to follow Jesus and grow in our life of faith! Many of these resources are available year round, and this is also the case with Adult Forum, which meets in the Chapel on Sunday mornings from 9:45-10:30.

During Lent this year, Adult Forum will explore creative spiritual practices. We are thrilled to be hosting a number of knowledgeable and passionate individuals who will challenge and inspire us through engagement with the visual, literary, musical, and performative arts. Our first speaker, Pamela Lanza, is a local Bay Area artist. You'll find some of her art adorning the walls of the Chapel all throughout Lent. She will be leading the adult forum on March 9, talking about visual art as it pertains to spiritual practice. Mariel Spengler and Elizabeth Hood will lead our second adult forum in Lent, on March 16. They will address how to engage faith and family through creative spiritual activities to share across the generations. On March 23, Stephen Georgiou will be joining us from Berkeley to talk about poetry and spiritual practice. He is a member of the CARE faculty (Center for the Arts, Religion and Education) and will be sharing his expertise as well as lead in writing and reading. March 30 will be devoted to music and worship as Tim Getz leads the adult forum. You won't want to miss this deeply captivating attention to faith and music! Our final Lenten session will take place on April 6, led by the wonderful and talented Carla DeSola. Also a member of the CARE faculty in Berkeley, she will be leading a session on liturgical dance. All are welcome, and no prior experience is required to participate!

Barbara Pitkin, Geri Horsma, Bob Kraus,
Vicar Nikoli Falenschek, Pastor Matt Smuts

Wednesdays of Faith at Grace:

A lot can change in six weeks... beginning with Ash Wednesday, a celebration and reminder of our human mortality, and as a sign of mourning and repentance to God. This will be a beautiful service full of darkness and light and a call to closeness with God.

(From Sunday and Seasons) "Change is a constant in our lives. Some changes mark gradual transitions, as when daytime shifts toward twilight or winter turns to spring. Others happen in the blink of an eye, separating time into "before" and "after". We choose to undergo some changes after carefully considering our options, while others are forced upon us.

"Change is hard. We long for the expected and familiar, but all too often find ourselves in the midst of uncertainty and the unknown. We cannot predict how things will turn out. The hymnwriter Joachim Neander proclaimed God's steadfast love in the midst of life's inevitable changes:

"All my hope on God is founded
who will all my trust renew,
who through change and chance will guide me,
only good and only true.
God unknown, God alone,
call my heart to be thine own" (ELW 757)."

As we move toward Holy Week and Easter, many people find it a helpful spiritual practice to take additional opportunities for worship beyond Sunday morning. The setting of the sun and lighting of lamps in the evening is an ancient and traditional time of day for prayer in many religious traditions. Evening Prayer in the Grace sanctuary at 6:30 pm on Wednesdays during Lent will be a peaceful, reflective time of singing, scripture, and prayer.

After our Evening Prayer, at 7pm we will gather in the worship space for some caring conversation and time of group devotion for 20-30 min. Here is why you should join us.

Care to have some fun, keep your family (a family can be anyone who you connect with) communicating every night, and grow in your understanding of yourself and God?

Join us for this practice every Wednesday for the next six weeks and see if it doesn't help grow your faith and grow your connection.

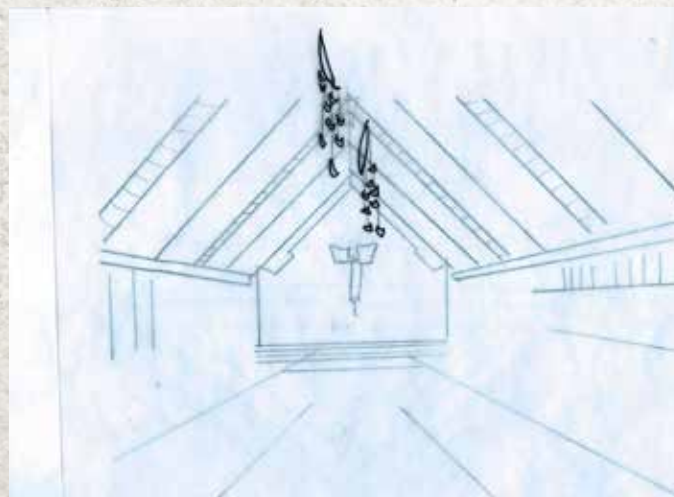
We drop everything else that we are doing, turn off the television, put down the newspaper or homework, set the cell phone on silence and gather together.

1. SHARE highs & lows of the day
2. READ and highlight a verse of Scripture in your Bible
3. TALK about how the verse relates to your highs & lows
4. PRAY for your highs & lows, for your family, and for the world
5. BLESS one another

You want a great relationship with your family? You want openness, honesty, caring and sharing in your family? You want to raise up people to be strong, thoughtful, empathetic, positive, healthy adults out in the world some day? You can't buy that. You have to invest in it. And the investment is the most expensive currency you own – your TIME – aimed at that most precious young person in your life.

People spell love T-I-M-E. Be intentional. Be consistent. Be caring. Every night. Every home.

No one else can do that for you.



6 Weeks of Growth and Change

Ash Wednesday and Lent for Little Ones

Lent can be confusing not just for our littlest members to understand but everyone. Lent is a time of turning away from our busy lives filled with television, games, cell phones and other distractions and instead turn to God. We pause and take time for God.

Year after year I see how excited children get as they approach the altar for imposition of the ashes and how proud they are when they walk away. They may not fully understand the significance, but they do understand their connectedness to the church and to God through this act. You could simply explain that the ashes remind us that God is always with us and that he loves us, when we look in the mirror with our ashes we can see how we are loved and changed by God.

We invite you to Soup Supper on Ash Wednesday at 5:30pm with your family, I will then take all the children and parents to the Narthex for a simple activity. We will have paper where children can draw their faces and what they will look like with the ashes. We will hang those pictures in the Narthex on the following Sunday for all to see. Parents and children can then continue into worship together at 6:30pm.

* We would also love for children and families to help us lead our Lenten evening prayer each week by serving as readers. Anyone interested in serving, please contact me. It will be awesome to see people of all ages help lead us through this season of Lent.

Our worship space will be decorated with a brand new mobile sculpture beginning on Ash Wednesday. Artist Dwight Mickelson has fabricated three arches of varying lengths, ornamented with colored lexan forms. As a congregation, we will be supplementing the hanging forms with our own pieces. All throughout Lent, you will find a slip of brightly colored paper in your bulletin. Please fill in the short answer blank on this sheet of paper and put it in a basket in the narthex!! These will eventually become part of the mobile sculpture.

2014 Lent and Holy Week

Ash Wednesday

The beginning of Lent, a time to begin confession and remember our mortality.

- 5:45pm Soup & Bread Supper | Brown Hall
- 6:30pm Ash Wednesday Worship | Sanctuary

Wednesdays in Lent (following Ash Wednesday)

- 5:45pm Soup & Bread Supper | Brown Hall
- 6:30pm Lenten Evening Prayer | Sanctuary
- 7:00pm Conversation & Devotion | Sanctuary

The Wednesdays in Lent following Ash Wednesday will feature a 30 minute Lenten Evening Prayer service in the sanctuary, followed by an opportunity to participate in a 20-30 minute time of Conversation and Devotion. You are welcome to participate in one or both—a great opportunity for worship and building relationships and community. Increase the power of Holy Week in your life by observing the whole journey from Ash Wednesday . . . you will be glad you did.

Holy Week Worship

Palm Sunday April 13	8:30/10:45 am
Maundy Thursday April 17	7:30 pm
Good Friday April 18	7:30 pm
Easter Vigil (Holy Saturday) April 19	7:30 pm
Easter Sunday April 20	8:30/10:45 am



2014 Dates

Registration Night	2/6
Counselor Apps Due	3/11
CIT Interviews	3/12 & 3/13
Hire Date	4/1
Counselor Training (ALL counselors)	6/1
I'm Blessed	
Session 1	6/2 – 6
Performance	6/6
The Disappearance of Mirabelle VanDeVeer	
Sessions 2A/B	6/9 – 6/20
2A Performance	6/19
2B Performance	6/20
We Have a Right	
Session 3	6/23 – 27
Performance	6/27
Esther	
Sessions 4A/B	8/4 – 8/15
4A Performance	8/14
4B Performance	8/15

Christian Music Theater (CMT) is a performing arts camp for children of ALL faiths, cultivating consideration, confidence, and community. Each day children participate in designing costumes, constructing sets, acting and singing, and learning choreographed movement—all culminating in an original musical drama. Under the direction of Kären Salvesson, CMT has enriched the lives of Bay Area children for decades. Join us, for this, our 29th year!

Christian Music Theater at Grace Lutheran Church

June
I'm Blessed

Every child possesses unique gifts, but some are subtle. Our protagonist Aaron/Erin has no apparent talent, at least none of the 'obvious good ones.' But in a world where tough guys expose their passion for embroidery or reveal dreams of becoming a librarian, one learns that everyone possesses diverse interests. As the play and the session unfold, the children will see the value of quieter gifts like loving well, listening intently, and being a good friend.

Session 1: 9 AM — 4 PM (all day)

Performance — Friday, June 6 at 7:30 PM

The Disappearance of Mirabelle VanDeVeer

Session 2 | June 9 – 20 (Monday – Friday)

When the Van DeVeer sisters throw a party, they know how to have a ball. This grand gala at their mansion is attended by everyone who's anyone. Unfortunately each of the guests embodies either one of the seven deadly sins or their counterpart virtues, which makes for some interesting repartee. A whacky whodunit unfolds at the ball when Mirabella is discovered missing. As pandemonium sets in, detectives, servants, and houseguests look for clues and examine the evidence. Has she disappeared into thin air, run away, was it foul play? or... perhaps without her vanity and pride she's unrecognizable.

~~Session 2A:~~ 9 AM — 12 NOON (mornings)

FULL

~~Performance — Thursday, June 19 at 7:30 PM~~

Session 2B: 1 PM — 4 PM (afternoons)

Performance — Friday, June 20 at 7:30 PM

We Have a Right

Session 3 | June 23 – 27 (Monday – Friday)

When a favorite camp is destined for destruction, its loyal campers are devastated. Harvey, the camp director, is intimidated by the power plays of nasty Mr. Suit. With all hope gone, the camp seems destined to become a power plant; but never underestimate the power of a child. As the children come together to save the camp, they realize that though they are small, they are capable of great things. Camp Yahweh is a place full of great fun, memorable songs, and rockin' dances. Why would you go to any other camp?

Session 3: 9 AM — 4 PM (all day)

Performance — Friday, June 27 at 7:30 PM

August
Esther

Session 4 | August 4 - 15 (Monday – Friday)

This scripture story about a Hebrew girl who rose above all expectations takes on a modern twist with this original script and 10 fabulous songs. With Mordecai to hooray and Haman to boo, this rollicking story will engage and delight audience and players alike, reminding each that we possess the power to make a difference in the world.

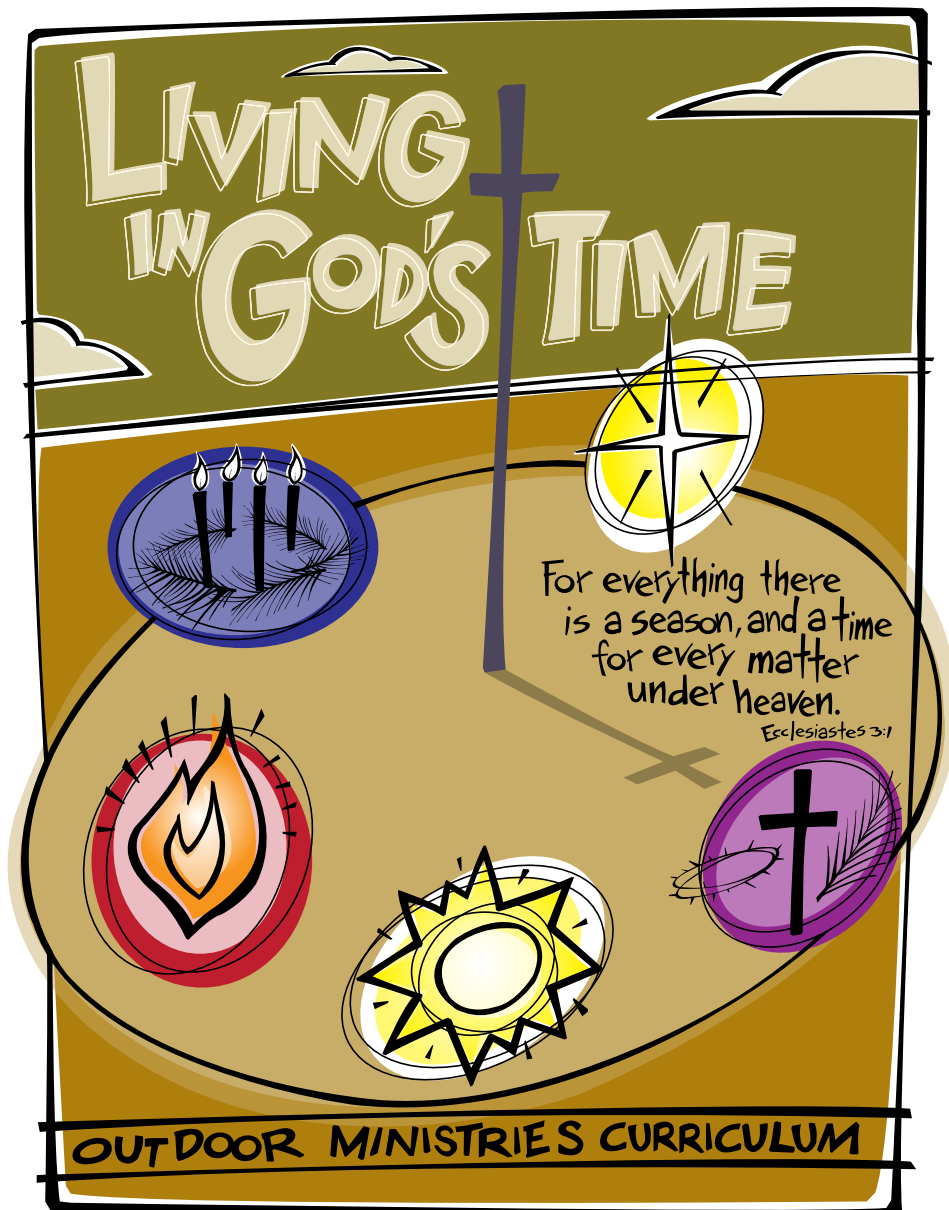
Session 3A: 9 AM — 12 NOON (mornings)

Performance — Thursday, August 14 at 7:30PM

Session 3B: 1 PM — 4 PM (afternoons)

Performance — Friday, August 15 at 7:30 PM

Registration Information at: www.graceCMT.org



Summer Day Camp at Grace

July 7 - 11, 2014 | 9 am - 3 pm

Evening Potluck & Program for campers, their families, and the whole Grace Community:

Thursday, July 10 | 6:00 pm

for children currently in Kindergarten - fifth grade
(options for younger children on page 7)

Day Camp this summer is all about Living in God's Time. This exciting camp will focus on the rhythms of life from Advent to Christmas to Easter and more. Kids will have creative opportunities to build relationships and deepen their understanding and appreciation for God's Time and related holy days that we observe. This all takes place in an energetic outdoor camp environment tailored to our campus and led by college age youth who have dedicated their summer to building faith in our children.

In a typical day, your camper will experience:

- Worship
- Small Group Time (Bible lessons, art projects, crafts, and fun games)
- Snack and Lunch
- All Camp Activities
- Sing Alongs
- Quiet Time

Families are invited to join in our closing worship each day!

Your child will need to bring:

A water bottle with their name on it.

A packed lunch.

Comfortable clothing for active play.

Cost: \$100/one child

\$50/each additional child in the same family

Questions? Elizabeth Hood

elizabeth@gracepa.org

Reserve your spot online! www.gracepa.org/daycamp

Youth and Families

PALM SUNDAY | APRIL 13

Meet in the Courtyard at 9:30 am to walk to Hoover Park for a quick time with St. Marks, and then we will circle back to Grace for an art project for all.

CONFIRMATION NEWS!

April 19: 5 pm | Easter Eve Decorating Party!

Pizza dinner, filling eggs with candy, and decorating Brown Hall

Confirmation Retreat | April 25-27

For all confirmation students!! especially our eighth graders. Join us for a weekend of fun, learning, and laughter.

Rite of Confirmation | June 1 | 10:45 am service

All are welcome to join us for this wonderful celebration of our youth and their faith!



SUNDAY SCHOOL UPDATE

The Sunday School children are hoping, with the help of their parents and the congregation, to raise enough money this season of Lent for a Family Farm through the ELCA Global Barnyard.



A cow, a couple of goats, a dozen chicks, two pigs, and farming tools, plus agricultural training and marketing support, for example, can help a family achieve a fresh start. With new tools and techniques, crops will grow bigger and stronger than ever before. Eggs, milk, and meat from farm animals will provide enough food to eat and sell on the market, helping a family to escape the cycle of hunger and poverty—for good. Cost: only \$700.

On Sunday, March 2, all the children will receive a barn to collect money at home throughout Lent. Each week in Sunday School Opening, we will talk about all the different animals. We will end this project with a celebration on Palm Sunday after our trip to the park.

May 4 | Teacher Appreciation

May 18 | Last day of regular Sunday School

(Summer Sunday School is planned for this summer!)

Come Celebrate Easter with Your Grace Family! Easter Sunday, April 20

"This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." God has indeed raised from the dead the one who was put to death "by hanging him on a tree." Alleluia! God allows Jesus to appear "to us who were chosen by God as witnesses" in holy baptism and invites us to eat and drink at the table of the risen Christ. Alleluia!

Worship | 8:30 am

Easter Brunch | 9:00 - 10:30am

\$5 per person/ \$20 per family as a fund raiser for our Youth

Worship | 10:45 am

Easter Egg Hunt* | between worship services

10:00 am – children 5 years and younger

10:15 am – children 6 years and older

Meet in Brown Hall to start the hunt!



HIGH SCHOOL NEWS UPDATES

As always, lots of exciting things are happening with our High School Youth!

On March 22, we will have a Youth Room Work Day, Bowling Adventure, and Lock In.

Senior Sunday this year will be May 11. This is a special service where we take a moment to honor and recognize our graduating high school seniors. The Grace quilters have been working all year on quilts for these youth, and we will present them at the 10:45 am service.

Western States Youth Gathering 2014

June 27-July 3 (event and travel)

Theme: Epic Fail | Epic Faith

- » Road trip to Southern California (What is more fun than that?)
- » Staying in California Lutheran University Dorms!
- » Get to experience college life for a few days
- » Awesome contemporary Lutheran Worship with hundreds of Lutheran Youth
- » Artist: Agape
- » Worship led by CLU college worship band
- » Learning workshops to choose from
- » Awesome speakers
- » Full day of community service in LA
- » A trip that you will never forget



Western States Youth Gathering

A great preview of a mass gathering, but a smaller level, and an introduction to Lutheran college life.

Deposit Due | April 2 | \$100

Eligibility: Any teenager going into ninth, tenth, eleventh, or twelfth grade, or having just graduated from high school at the time of the Gathering, is eligible to register as part of a congregational group. All registrants should be members or guests of ELCA congregations.



Upper LEFT
Getting ready for the egg hunt!

LEFT
First Communion Class - bread baking and banner making!

CENTER
Senior quilts: wrapped up in love

RIGHT
Care Packages remind our college students that they are loved...

Found

by Elizabeth Hood

We all feel a little lost sometimes. I have to admit that I felt pretty lost this fall and into this winter. I recently realized while I was at the ELCA Extravaganza, the annual Youth Ministry Network Gathering, that I was feeling lost because I hadn't taken good care of myself physically or spiritually. The purpose for this gathering is to be renewed, both in our careers as Youth Ministers and personally, because so much of our work is personal.

During the worships at the Extravaganza, I felt a longing for a connectedness to God. I longed to linger in prayer, to talk to people about my faith, and hear about their faith. It was upon returning from this week that I got sick, both my body and my mind were exhausted. I was feeling more lost than ever. But it was here that God reached out to me through a dear friend. She said to me, "pick a book from the Bible, any book, and let's read through it together, one day at a time." I realized then that what I needed was to feel close to God, not lost in the world alone.

In our baptism, God reaches out to us and claims us as a child of God. In communion, Jesus offers his body and blood for us and for our forgiveness. But how often are we reaching out to God, to God's people, listening for God's word, or leaning into the Holy Spirit? I realized that for me, it had been too long.

I have shared this with a few friends recently, as well as with youth, in faith conversations, and I have realized I am not alone in this feeling, we all feel a little lost sometimes. When you feel lost, stop and look around. What are you missing, what have you left behind? What will help guide you in the right direction? We almost never take as good care of ourselves as we should, and we probably don't stop and listen to God's guiding care as

often as we should. My prayer is to do both more in my daily life. What will your prayer be?



Elizabeth will take the Grace Youth from Palo Alto to Mt. Cross for an amazing week of camp in the Santa Cruz Mountains among the trees!

We leave Sunday afternoon and get picked up at camp Friday afternoon! Children 2nd grade through 8th grade are invited to join Elizabeth and other Grace children and youth for this fabulous week of camp.

Register at: www.mtcross.org

Dates: Week 6

July
20-25

Men of Grace

March 9, 5-7 pm | Pretzel Making

It's time that we make some pretzels together! Come on out and learn about traditional baking techniques, and then stick around for the Taizé service if you can!!

Note: This is NOT the first Sunday of the month!!

April 6, 5-7 pm | Pot Luck and Prayer

Bring some food and bring some spirit as we wrestle with prayer. What is prayer? Why do we pray? And, what's more, we'll have a chance to pick something or someone for whom to pray for the next month. We'll talk about our experience when we gather again in May!

Young Adults | Pub Theology and Events

Coffee and Brunch

On the Second Sunday of each month, you can choose to come to one or both of the following options: coffee in between services at Philz down the road or brunch at noon at the Palo Alto Breakfast House, across from CVS. There will be no Philz visit on April 13, however, as that is Palm Sunday, but there will be brunch that day!

Lutheran Olympics

On March 2 after services, Grace is hosting the first annual Lutheran Olympics, and we are forming a Young Adults team! Let us know if you'd like to participate!!

Stanford Concert

Frank Ticheli, renowned composer and conductor, will be joining the Stanford Wind Ensemble on Saturday March 8 (7:30 pm). Come out for a great night of music and fellowship!

Pub Theology

It's time to start up Pub Theology again! As of right now, we are going to try gathering on the second Friday of every month for drinks and conversation. Elizabeth (who lives quite close to Grace) will be hosting our first Pub Theology night on March 14 at 7:00p m. Please bring your own drinks or drinks to share!! Check email in the coming weeks for more details!



ABOVE

A fabulous time was had by all at this year's Sweetheart Party!



Lutheran Olympics

Come one, come all!

All ages church event! 3-300 years old

Sunday, March 2 | 12:00 noon

Fun and church related games.

Potluck Lunch

and then the games begin...
Contact Elizabeth for more info.

Read the Way to Easter

We've pulled many Lent and Easter resources to put on display in the library, all on one shelf. Please come in and browse. Here are a few suggestions that might appeal to you as meaningful Lenten practices that can fit into busy lives and schedules:

We have several books in the *40-Day Journey* series from Augsburg Fortress. Each book invites readers on a personal spiritual journey with a Christian leader from the past or present (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther, Maya Angelou, Parker Palmer, Joan Chittister). One unique component of the forty chapters is a journal-writing exercise, along with an excerpt from the subject's writings, Bible verses, and prayers.

N. T. Wright, the theologian and prolific author of the popular *For Everyone* commentary series, also has a *Lent For Everyone* series for the Matthew, Mark, and Luke years, with daily Bible readings and his commentary on the selection.

Sister Wendy's Book of Meditations is not specifically for Lent, but divided into themes: peace, love, joy, silence. Each two-page spread has a color reproduction of a painting on one page as a prompt, and a brief meditation based on the painting and how it evokes one of the themes on the opposite page.

From the Edge of the Crowd, by James E. Sargent uses the device of a follower in the crowd traveling with Jesus sending daily letters to the reader describing his adventures and contemplating Jesus' actions. There are also "Contemporary Reflections" on each day's letter.

I'd also like to remind everyone that we have several books on using the labyrinth, including *Walking a Sacred Path*, by Lauren Artress. Some of you with a schedule that permits might like to explore that as a Lenten exercise.

Families might be interested in *The Christian Family Easter Book*, edited by Ron and Lyn Klug. This is a storybook of 40 stories, along with poems, prayers, carols, on themes relating to Easter (and some that seem just for fun) that are aimed at preschool and lower elementary-aged children that can be read aloud daily, along with a poem or prayer as a family Lenten observance.

Finally, whatever your politics, Bill O'Reilly's book with Martin Dugard, *Killing Jesus*, is a fascinating read. Far from contemplative, it's written like a suspense story with much historical background. The twenty-one chapters could be paced out over the forty days of Lent, but you'd probably finish much sooner. ■

Thank you for supporting the 2014 pledge campaign.

The annual pledge campaign is an integral part of church finances because it allows the Finance Committee to predict annual contributions and prepare the 2014 annual budget. Grace Lutheran is 100% self-supported and our goal is to spend no more than we receive. Our planned expenses (such as church operations, children's programs, staff salaries, etc.) are directly tied to the financial commitments made during the pledge campaign.

The 2014 budget was presented to the congregation and approved during a congregational meeting in January. The budget reflects 2014 pledges. We received pledges from almost 90% of the congregation. The high percentage of members pledging means the 2014 budget more accurately reflects what will actually happen in 2014.

The number of members pledging remains steady. The total amount pledged increased about 6% from 2013 to 2014. As shown below some individual pledges were higher in 2014, some were lower, and some were the same. The change in individual pledges is expected since individual circumstances may change from year to year.

It is not too late to pledge for 2014.

In addition to annual pledges there are a number of other ways we can support the church and strengthen our community of believers. We give our time and talent by participating in various church functions such as serving on committees, greeters at church services, and joining the Wednesday work crew. Endowment Fund gifts are planned gifts from our hearts to the mission and

ministries of Grace Lutheran Church: we call it the Heritage Fund. The endowment funds are permanent and have an enduring impact. Anyone can give an endowment gift of any size at any time. You may do this now, in the memory of a loved one, or as part of your estate plan.

Please contact Marilyn Aden or Carol Ezrati if you have any questions about the 2014 pledge campaign. Martha Meyer can provide additional information on the Endowment Fund.



Council Notes

During the past few months, Council has spent much of its energy and time focusing on financial issues regarding both finishing 2013 and budgeting for 2014, and on the initial Listening Phase of the Capital Campaign.

Budget: The financial reports from the last quarter of 2013 made it clear that the church would finish 2013 slightly behind plan. That said, pledging for 2014 was very good, and a sensible balanced budget was approved for congregational meeting, which included raises for staff, but does not include funding for an intern beyond fulfilling our commitment to Vicar Nikoli.

Capital Campaign: The Council spent the majority of its November meeting in a virtual meeting with Kristin Wiersma from Kairos. On January 14, the Council joined the Capital Campaign Team, staff, and committee members to hear a report on the CAT survey, and then, on February 19, joined the Capital Campaign Team, Bridge Team, Campus Master Plan Task Force, staff, and Finance Committee to hear Kristin's report of recommendations based on the Listening Phase. Please see the separate article in this issue—and be sure to thank the members of the Capital Campaign Team who have been working diligently on our behalf to facilitate the Listening Phase and think about our next steps.

Annual Meeting: At the Annual Congregational meeting on February 2, the congregation approved the proposed budget. In addition, the congregation elected a Nominating Committee who will identify a slate of candidates for election to Council at our spring congregational meeting. Thanks to Sabine Kabel-Eckes, Wyatt Ritchie, and Jack Koepfgen, who agreed to serve.

Other: In addition to hearing reports from Pastor Matt and Vicar Nikoli every month but November, Council heard reports from the Preschool and Social Concerns Committees in December, the Youth and Preschool Committees in January, and the Stewardship, Youth, Children's Education, and Adult Education Committees in February.

Council Personnel Changes: Council regretfully accepted the resignation of Tara Davis (who has moved to Sydney, Australia). At our November meeting, we welcomed Gail Foelsch, who was appointed to fill the position vacated by Jill Karlgaard (whose family moved to Houston), and in December we welcomed Katy Siegel, who was appointed to fill the position vacated by Tara Davis. Katy was also elected to serve as Council Secretary.

Blessings in this Lenten season,
Maria Derrick, Grace Council President ■

COUNCIL LIAISONS:

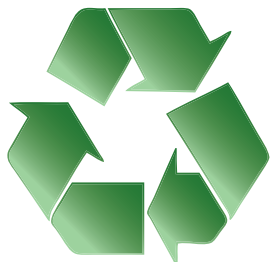
- Dave Bohn: Social Ministry
- Al Brudos: Finance
- Julie Buckley: Mutual Ministry, Endowment
- Tom Conn: Bridge Team, Personnel, Worship and Music
- Maria Derrick (President): Children's Christian Education
- Ray Ernenwein: Youth Ministry Team
- Gail Foelsch: Preschool Board
- Twila Forbes: Library
- Elizabeth Katz (Vice-President): Stewardship
- Holly Lucke: Vicar Nikoli's Lay Committee
- Don McElravy: Personnel
- Katy Siegel (Secretary): Youth



Volunteers Needed!

by Grady Kase

Volunteers are needed for the next Synod Assembly, May 30 to June 1, 2014, in Burlingame, for local planning committee before the Assembly—and during the Assembly, help with registration, hospitality, displays, distributing documents, or preparing badges. Meet people, get in on the action without traveling very far! Contact Grady Kase at (650) 384-6532 or lemon6thyme@yahoo.com



Printed on 30% post consumer recycled paper

Sunday Worship

8:30 & 10:45 am

«»«»«»«»«»«»

Also broadcast on Cable 30

Sundays 11 am | 8:30 pm

Mondays 12:30 pm



**Evangelical Lutheran
 Church in America**
 God's work. Our hands.
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Ash Wednesday
 March 5, 2014 | 6:30 pm

2014 Lent and Holy Week

Ash Wednesday

The beginning of Lent, a time to begin confession and remember our mortality.

- 5:45pm Soup & Bread Supper | Brown Hall
- 6:30pm Ash Wednesday Worship | Sanctuary

Holy Week Worship

Palm Sunday April 13	8:30/10:45 am
Maundy Thursday April 17	7:30 pm
Good Friday April 18	7:30 pm
Easter Vigil (Holy Saturday) April 19	7:30 pm
Easter Sunday April 20	8:30/10:45 am