

Spirit of Grace

FAITH IN ACTION

JOURNEY WITH US SO ALL MIGHT EXPERIENCE CHRIST'S LOVE



Pastor Harman reports from Kirchentag

"Ein Blick über den Tellerand"

Within days of arriving in Germany, my supervisor Matthias Weiß had Dawn and I holding a plate in front of us and looking over the edge of it for a photo that was placed on the cover of the church's next newsletter and was also used for the local newspapers. The title? "Ein Blick über den Tellerand" is literally translated as "a view or look beyond the edge of the plate". But the literal translation says very little about the actual meaning of the saying. The point of my wife and I holding a plate in front of us in this new strange place was to say - this is different; this is not the same old thing that we are accustomed to; this is an "opportunity" to learn something new, to see things differently - to grow, to challenge ourselves, to - yes - change. The idea behind the saying is to not simply look onto your plate (or current situation) and see what it contains, but also to take a new perspective and see what it looks like from the plate looking outward - to see things from another, perhaps not yet considered point of view.

As I write this, I find myself sitting in a parsonage for the church at which I did my internship here in Germany. In this very spot where I am sitting, just hours ago, three familiar faces at Grace Lutheran Church: Bobbie Cameron, Martha Sienkiewicz and Barbara Lake all sat having coffee and discussing a different perspective - the experience of a worship service in a foreign country. Perhaps Grace Lutheran Church in West Springfield, Massachusetts has never thought of itself as a globally connected church, but with this visit of only a couple of people, the face of Grace Lutheran Church is changing. It now includes friends from half-way around the world in a place that probably never considered itself as a globally connected church - and yet, we are connected.

Change is one of those things that never changes. Even when we resist it, things around us change and we cannot help but be affected by our surroundings, our environment, our culture, etc. We are a people called to change, called to be changed by the love of Christ in our lives; and called to change others by that love. As we change, grow, challenge ourselves and support each other in change, it is important to remember that the love of Christ not only calls us to change, grow, etc., but also to share that love with each other in community. And who know's? When we look beyond the edge of our plate, we may just see Christ looking back at us, urging us to find new ways of living, loving and learning to be Christ in this world.

From Bremen Germany,
Pastor Derek Harman

Warm greetings from Sweden to our brothers and sisters in Christ at Grace Lutheran.

It has been a year since we spent our summer worshipping the Lord with you and after meeting up with a handful of you in Germany at the Kirchentag we were reminded how much we miss you all. We were so glad to be a part of Grace's delegation to the Kirchentag as we certainly would not have attended otherwise. It was an incredible experience to join with over 300,000 other Christians as they came together to worship and learn about the Savior of the Nations, Jesus Christ, but it was especially wonderful to touch base with Bobby, Barbara, Martha, and Derek.



Our first six months in Sweden a wonderfully joyful challenge.

We all understand more than ever what it is like to be strangers in a strange land and it has enabled us to think more clearly about what it means to be welcoming to strangers. The author of Hebrews tells us that we, as Christians, are strangers in this world for our true home in fulfillment of the God's Kingdom which will only be fully realized when Christ returns (Hebrews 11). And yet, even though we are strangers in a strange land it is we that are called to be hospitable to other strangers (Hebrews 13: 1-2). While living in Sweden we have experience the blessing of being welcomed not as strangers but as members of the same family in Christ, we have also realized that though we are in a strange place we can reach out and welcome others.

For our family the greatest impact left on us by the Kirchentag was made by the way that our host family welcomed us into their home without reservation. Our host family literally knew nothing about us other than the fact that we were from the United States and that there would be four of us. This was not a family with a lot of money or a large house but they gave to us out of their need. They made themselves uncomfortable in their own home so that we could be comfortable. Our families grew quite close given the short time we were together and I know that we were all richly blessed by the way God bound us together.

We thank you for your hospitality towards us as we have come and visited you over the years, and especially as we were among you last summer. We encourage you all the more to continue to give of your selves so that Grace Lutheran can be know as a family in Christ that is welcoming to strangers.

With deepest love in Christ Jesus,

Matthew, Kristin, Linnea, and Sonja Erickson

RUMMAGE SALE AT GRACE :-



A rummage sale featuring gently used clothing and housewares will be held at Grace Lutheran Church, Route 20 on June 20th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Donations will be accepted at the church Monday - Thursday, June 15th - 18th between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. and on Friday the 19th from 1 p.m. - 5 p.m. You can also call Martha at 568-8033 for pick-up.

THE LITURGY CORNER – by Karen Blanchard

Below is Dr. Luther's Seal, along with his description of it. While the words are a bit old-fashioned, they are so powerful. My humble opinion says the words are wonderful—and show his love of, and devotion to, Christ. It also shows his hope and his belief in the “beginning of heavenly joy to come.”

Take, for instance, mortified—what a great word! It means to destroy the strength, vitality, or functioning of.... For those of you interested Dictionary says it's an inflected form Yikes—well, okay.



in such things, Merriam-Webster's Online of the word “mortify” and is a transitive verb.

Webster's also says it's an obsolete 14th ogy: From the Middle English mortifi- the Late Latin mortificare; and from

Century word, with the following etymol- fien; from the Anglo-French mortifier; from the Latin mort-, mors. Hmmmmm!!

Here are Dr. Luther's words:

The first thing expressed in my seal is a cross, black, within the heart; to put me in mind that faith in Christ crucified saves us. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness."

Now, although the cross is black, mortified, and intended to cause pain, yet it does not change the color of the heart, does not destroy nature — i.e., does not kill, but keeps alive. "For the just shall live by faith," — by faith in the Savior.

But this heart is fixed upon the center of a white rose, to show that faith causes joy, consolation and peace. The rose is white, not red, because white is the ideal color of all angels and blessed spirits.

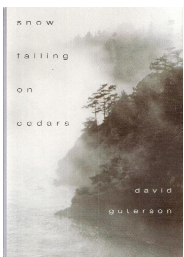
This rose, moreover, is fixed in a sky-colored ground, to denote that such joy of faith in the spirit is but an earnest and beginning of heavenly joy to come, as anticipated and held by hope, though not yet revealed. And around this ground base is a golden ring, to signify that such bliss in heaven is endless, and more precious than all joys and treasures, since gold is the best and most precious metal. Christ, our dear Lord, He will give grace unto eternal life.

Amen,

Martin Luther

Book Discussion at Grace

A lively discussion on prejudice and the effects of war on the people who fight in them took place at the June 15th book discussion. Nine people gathered to discuss the book “Snow Falling on Cedars” by David Guterson. The next discussion will take place on August 9th and the book to be discussed will be “To Live or to Perish Forever - Two Tumultuous Years in Pakistan”. This is a true story written by Nicholas Schmidle, the grandson of Ed and Joyce Jutkus, who tells about his time spent in the place dubbed “the most dangerous country in the world. If you have any questions, call Carolyn at 739-0790.



FROM THE BISHOP



By Bishop Margaret G. Payne, New England Synod, ELCA

What's NOT Wrong?

The Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh writes that we invite sorrow, suffering and depression into our hearts when we constantly focus on what is wrong – with ourselves, our companions, our church, our community, our world. But we stay connected to joy and grace when we shift our focus to what is NOT wrong, and live in gratitude – for breath, sunshine, work, love and each day that comes to us as a gift from God. This way of living is not a denial of the problems that surround us; it is the recognition that the love and power of God is bigger than the problems. An infrequently used synonym for gratitude is “refreshed.” When we cannot see daily gifts, we become weary and cynical. When we open our eyes to them, God renews our spirits.

Throughout the Bible, we are reminded of God's gifts and told to live daily in thankfulness for them. This “attitude of gratitude” is not only the healthiest way to live, it is also the way that allows God to shape us to make a difference in a world that is filled with things that ARE wrong.

In his letter to the Colossians, St. Paul writes: “... let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to God.” (Colossians 3:15-16, NRSV)

Paul bases his advice for “the good life” on two things: a personal relationship of indwelling with Christ and a connection with the faith community. We need both to find the spiritual balance that will provide the peace and wisdom that enables us to be true witnesses to the gospel. It is this intermingling of individual gifts with community that guides us into the joy found in lives of faith and service.

As members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we are blessed with a strong awareness of God's grace, regular nourishment of Word and Sacrament, and a deeply engrained impulse to work on all that IS wrong in the world. God's Work. Our Hands. Lutherans have the DNA for helping others and we have a denominational network that gets the job done in a remarkably effective way in our own country and throughout the world. Lutherans also have the DNA for frugality, and so the money that is channeled through our church for good works is used more productively than any other charitable group. (Well, we are always in the top three.)

When you send mission support beyond your congregation, here are some of the ways that you fix the things that are wrong in the world: refugees are cared for in camps, immigrants are supported in new lives, Lutheran brothers and sisters in the Holy Land are accompanied in their oppression, disaster relief is given around the world, children are fed, wells are dug, fish farms are created, micro grants are provided, medical supplies arrive in hospitals, people with disabilities are welcomed and injustice is confronted. Recently, the United Nations and the Bill Gates Foundation requested the partnership of our church to help with the problem of HIV/AIDS and malaria in Africa. So, we now have a new initiative and a new partnership that will work to relieve the stigma and suffering of those diseases.

When you are challenged to send 10 percent or more of the gifts given to your congregation to ministry beyond your local setting, you are not sending money to “the synod.” You are supporting a world-wide network that sees all the things that are wrong in the world, and in the power of God and with your support, fixes them. Thank you for your partnership.

New Members Welcomed!

At the 9:30 a.m service on May 10th, Grace Lutheran Church on Route 20 introduced and welcomed new members and their children. New members pictured below are: Andrew Alexander, Mark and Stephe French and their daughter, Caprina, and Dale Owens. Others new members are Bill and Sandra Thompson, John and Kirsten Romanelli and their children Julia, Justin and Daniel, Joe Paradise and his wife Rebecca Murray, Victoria Kania, Gary Distefano and his fiancée, Beth Hoey, Peggy Parsons, Joe and Gina Turbolski and their daughter, Mary. A reception honoring the new members followed the service.



Crop Walk Success

On May 17th, Grace Lutheran Church hosted a Crop Walk sponsored by Church World Service. Prior to the Walk, members of Grace cooked hot dogs provided by the Agawam Lions for the walkers. Grace walkers raised \$937.00 and with a one-third match from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, they were able to donate \$1,250.00 for world hunger.

Pictured below left to right are: Ginny Tonelli-Green, coordinator for Grace Walkers, and member George Goulet.

Also pictured cooking for the walkers are left to right : members Joyce Jutkus and Chip Arnold



Congregational Care Group Update

The Congregational Care group was a part of the Vision Committee meeting. The group is responsible for visits for members in need and to demonstrate care and concern for them.

In addition to visitations, the group will assist in providing rides to church services and activities, establish a board to be hung in Jung Hall displaying photos of members and to help Pastor on needed calls.

Gretchen Schwamb also suggested forming a prayer chain. If you are interested, please contact her. Also suggested is the resumption of name tags for members and visitors.

Anyone wishing to be a part of the Congregational Care group is welcome. Please contact Rollie Jacobs or Pastor Harman.

Update on 2009 Habitat for Humanity efforts

June 5, 2009

In 2009 Grace Lutheran Church West Springfield is once again contributing its time and talents to Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity.

Due to some delays at the originally planned Wrentham Rd. site, the build location will instead be a home refurbishing project on Sylvan St. in Springfield. The kick-off for this year's event will take place this Saturday, June 6, 2009, at 8:30 a.m.

With funding assistance for the build provided by the Western Massachusetts chapter of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, Grace Lutheran Church West Springfield has already pledged \$1,000 toward this year's build, for which the church will run a rummage sale in June.

Additionally, Grace has committed to participating in two work days at the build this year. Volunteers are always needed to help fulfill our quota of at least six crew members, plus providing lunch and water for all those working at the site that day.

Habitat for Humanity is also looking for "gifts in kind" to help the build effort.

These items and services include:

- # Excavation
- # Water and sewer hookup
- # Concrete
- # Plumbing and heating
- # Electrical
- # Lumber
- # Roofing
- # Carpet and tile
- # Kitchen and bath cabinets
- # Landscaping

Smoke detectors If you or someone you know can donate any of these items or services, or if you are interested in learning more about this Saturday's kick-off event or participating in Grace Lutheran Church West Springfield's upcoming build work days (which are a great way for first-time Habitat for Humanity volunteers to get involved) email Martha, Grace's Habitat for Humanity congregational liaison.



Communications Team Update June 7, 2009

Kevin Shea

On June 4, 26 members met in Jung Hall to continue discussions started by the Strategic Plan. After a brief welcome and introduction by Pastor Harman, the large group broke up into three teams: Communication, Congregational Care, and Youth Worship.



Communication

We began by brainstorming ideas to coordinate information gathering for distribution as weekly announcements, in the newsletter, and on the website. We would like everyone to use the following options to keep us informed of their announcements – 1) Fill out paper announcement sheets that will be provided during services; 2) Email announcements@gracelutheranonline.com. Taking advantage of one (or both) of these options will enable us to provide complete, accurate, and timely updates.



We would also like to encourage members to help further enhance the Grace website. If you take pictures or video at a Grace event, we would love to link these to the website. We think YouTube videos and picture slide shows will help communicate the vibrancy and excitement of our Grace community to our current members and the community at large.

We will continue to publish the newsletter every other month and want to elicit your support to make this process as smooth as possible. (We also hope to provide special editions for holidays like Christmas and Easter.) For the remainder of 2009, we will publish newsletters in August, October, and December. Submission deadlines for these issues will be July 19, September 20, and November 15, respectively. As always, we encourage you to submit articles highlighting recently completed and upcoming events.



Our next goal is to develop a new logo for Grace that incorporates our mission statement – Faith in Action: Journey with us so That All May Experience Christ's Love. We envision using this logo for all church business (stationary, letterhead, bulletin, webpage, newsletter, banners, etc.) and want it to be timeless and easy to manipulate electronically. After some debate, we plan to recruit a professional designer to help us achieve this goal. We are optimistic that this process will be complete by the end of the summer.

Finally, we discussed ideas for new and updated ways to communicate our message to the Grace community and beyond. Some initial ideas include:

- Business cards for members to distribute to others with space to write in event details
- Welcome pamphlets with key information aimed at visitors and guests
- Novelty items like pens, shopping lists, and refrigerator magnets
- Large vinyl banners in front of church announcing key events
- New letter board to place near Route 20 announcing events
- White board calendar in Jung Hall highlighting 2 months of Grace activities at a time

Strategic Planning Group Childrens Service Update

Quite a few members of Grace who were interested in helping to develop a new children's service on Sunday, or discussing worship at Grace in general, met during the Strategic Planning Meeting last Thursday.

The group learned the new service would be held before Sunday School and hopefully would attract young families who do not currently have a home church, although the service would be open to everyone. It would be geared towards younger children and older children would be encouraged to help with the service. There would be a LOT music and which would encourage a lot of "joyful noise."

Another meeting will be scheduled in a few weeks at which time we would get down to business. We are looking at:

- working with puppets again;
- what ELCA has to offer;
- what Augsburg Publishing had;
- visiting area churches that have children's services.

If you have any ideas, comments or concerns, or if you are interested in helping, please let me know.

Karen Blanchard

Summer Sunday Fun

Child of Grace, water, carrots, rainbows, hands, feet, chalk, flip flops

What do these have in common?

Come and put it all together with Summer Sunday Fun each Sunday from Jun 21st to September 6th.

Adults and teens with questions or wanting to help with the summer fun contact Carol Goulet.

Sunday School

Thank you to all our wonderful teachers and substitutes Kate O'Neil, Jen and Kevin Shea, Kim O'Neil, Diane Arnold, Sue Gross and Kristen Oberhiem.

Thank you also to a church that takes seriously God's word when in Proverbs we read "train a child in the way they should go and when they are old they will not turn from it." Pro.22:6

Carol Goulet

Christian Education Coordinator

22 New England Synod Assembly

“God’s work, our hands, Jars of Clay”

Do you know the:

Difference between a referendum and a memorial?

What the Lutheran church is doing in Honduras?

About the Lutheran church in Jerusalem and the Holy Land?

I didn’t before I attended the synod assembly in Sturbridge this May.

Pastor Derek will fill in the details on what was passed and what wasn’t. I would just like to share some of the observation as a Lay representative.

The business on Synod covered 13 referendums or memorials, compensation packages, amendments to by laws, ordinations, and graduations and of course a budget. There were workshops and 7: a.m. breakfasts, lots of singing, praying and fellowship.

To answer the questions a referendum is something the Synod can do. For example, a referendum can direct the New England Synod to draft a statement on genocide in Darfur and guide / direct local action by the New England Synod, whereas a memorial is a recommendation to the General Assembly of the ELCA, which will meet in August and represents the entire ELCA and therefore recommends that the ELCA draft a statement on Darfur.

At two consecutive mornings I attended breakfasts to learn about missions; the first morning focused on Honduras and I learned about the needs and mission trips there to help build school desks and ovens and most important relationships with God’s children in another part of the world. The second morning the topic was on the Lutheran church in Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Having been to the Global Mission event a few years ago this was a topic I had some knowledge of, but the meeting help me to realize that in any mission project the most important thing is the connection established between

children of God.No matter where they live, at both events those involved shared of what they gained, and going originally to give, they came back with so much more given to them.

It didn’t matter if we were graduating the first class from the School of Lay Ministry on Friday night or discussing the budget on Saturday morning, attending a workshop or bible studies or church building or actually sitting in the lobby with a new sister in Christ, prayer was there, God was present and working among His people. My prayer is next years Assembly will have so many people from Grace attending either as official voting representatives or just day guests. It is a place to see the way the business of the larger church carried out with love and pray and mutual respect for each other.

Carol Goulet



Holy Land Satellite Image

In the Footsteps of Martin Luther

“I believe in the holy catholic church”

What does this mean? Why do we say this in our Sunday liturgy?

With all due respect to the Roman Catholic Church, it does not mean “I believe in the Roman Catholic Church.” When Martin Luther resigned from the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church he did not leave the catholic faith. Neither did I reject the catholic faith when, in the footsteps of Martin Luther, I left the Roman Catholic priesthood forty years ago.

catholic (with a lowercase c) means “universal”; that is, it refers to all of God’s children—leaving out absolutely NO ONE. It does not mean “Roman Catholic” or any one religious denomination.

“Church” means people – not buildings, or hierarchy, or man made laws and regulations and rituals and fancy vestments or uniforms or ranks and titles. “Church/people” means that EVERYONE OF GOD’S CHILDREN—without exception—is invited to be a member of God’s church on Earth.

“Holy” means everyone who believes in the statements/teachings of the Nicene or Apostles Creed. Why were these written and still recited today? When the catholic church was starting up in the first three centuries, it consisted of people from every segment of the known world – devout Jews (i.e. Jesus and some of the apostles), former pagans, slaves, slave owners, rich, destitute, healthy, incurables, educated, illiterate, red voters, blue voters, etc. To settle the argument for all time, a meeting was held in AD 329 to decide who were truly the followers of Christ. Hence, the tenets of the Nicene and Apostles Creeds.

Do you ... “believe in God, The Father almighty,” ...? Then you haven’t given up the catholic church. You are a member of...”the holy catholic church,” ...

Luther never intended to start a new religion or give up his catholic faith; he just wanted to correct the wrongs in the Roman Catholic Church.

This article will hopefully help explain why the Apostle’s creed is recited, exactly as we do by the Episcopalians, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Moody Bible Institute, the National Catholic Church, etc. They are all part of the ...”holy, catholic church.”

Joe Paradise

SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

As we did last year, we are again taking part in the Summer Worship Schedule with other local ecumenical partners. We will not be closing our worship here at Grace Lutheran Church this year – but we will have the opportunity to host the other congregations and those that wish to take part in the “tour” to experience worship at other churches are welcome to.

Please note the following Summer Worship Schedule.

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Aug 2 | Church of the Good Shepherd 214 Elm Street 9:30 a.m. |
| Aug 9 | First Congregational Church 20 Lathrop Street 10:00 a.m. |
| Aug 16 | Mittineague United Methodist Church 800 Amostown Road 11:00 a.m. |
| Aug 23 | Grace Lutheran Church 1552 Westfield Street 10:00 a.m. |
| Aug 30 | Mittineague Congregational Church 1840 Westfield Street 10:00 a.m. |

Spirit of Grace

Faith In Action

Grace Lutheran Church

Journey With us so all might experience Christ's Love

Worship Wed. 6 PM Starting July 1st

Sat. 6 PM until July 1st

Sun. 9:30 AM

Inside this issue:

Kirchentag reports from Pastor and friends

Meet our new Members

Letter from Bishop Payne

Strategic Planning Meeting Updates

Liturgy Corner

Joe Paradis on Martin Luther and the church

and much more!

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