

# Grace Notes



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH • 7300 W DIVISION • RIVER FOREST IL 60305 • 708-366-6900 • WWW.GRACERIVERFOREST.ORG

March 2017

## Running on Empty

by Pastor Dave Wegner



A few years ago, at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Raleigh, North Carolina, we asked members of our congregation's youth group to take photos of a cross or cross-shaped item in the world during Lent. The response was amazing and a pattern emerged quickly: eagle-eyed teenagers are very good at spotting cross-shaped things in everyday situations. There were images of perpendicular steel supports holding up a roof, a tight shot of the side of a grocery cart — the intersecting wire mesh crossing over and over, and a bag of plant food that had fallen over next to a flowerbed and spilled dark brown earth into a cross-shaped pile.

There were images where youth had cut a cross out of construction paper and placed it in various places — locations where they felt Christ was present, or prayers for Christ's presence were needed. My favorite was a photo where the paper cross was placed in a wheelchair abandoned on the side of a lonely road. A miracle? An accident? Maybe favorite isn't the right word.

And there was the image featured with this article: a beautifully carved crucifix overlaying an all too familiar image from the dashboard of an automobile — the red needle on the gas gauge pointing to E. (I was assured the car was parked when the photo was taken.) I don't like it when that little light turns on. It means an extra stop on the journey. It means expenditure of hard-earned money. It means temptation in the checkout line — the impulse buys staring you in the face. But in this photo that little light takes on a whole new meaning. At the very least, perhaps, it invites a deeper level of self-reflection.

Am I running on empty? Are you? Are we?

**In the mad race to fill up our lives  
I wonder if we forget about the  
potential gifts of emptying them.**

*Continued on page 2*

# Running on empty

*Continued from page 1*

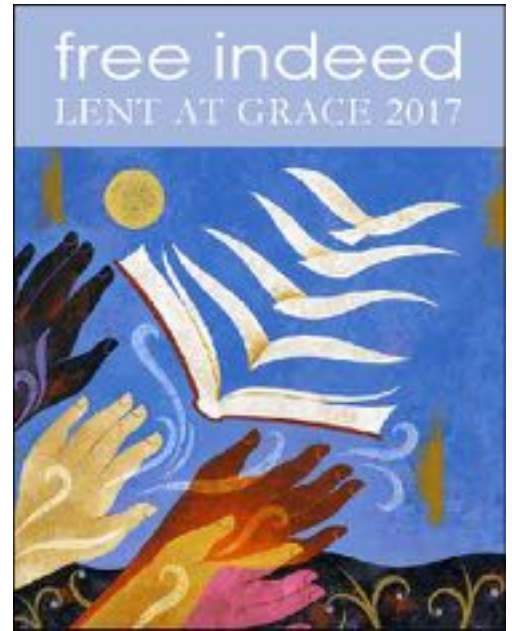
When paired with wood hewn into a cruciform shape, a low fuel light seems to represent a different kind of tank. If our lives, our spirits, or our bodies had a needle pointing somewhere between F and E, what would it read? Do we have control over its fullness or emptiness? Can we as easily pull our lives over, spend some hard-earned resources, avoid the distractions, and depart once again?

Religious people in every age have attempted to answer these questions, of course. Forms of meditation, reflection, retreat, and ascetic practice have come and gone as means by which we fill up our lives. But the longer I look at that cross and that little light I begin to wonder if filling up is really the goal? Is it even our job?

In the mad race to fill up our lives I wonder if we forget about the potential gifts of emptying them. No, the idea of emptying is not completely lost on us: we clean in the spring, declutter the garage, replace the bag in the vacuum cleaner, take out the trash. But those don't necessarily move the life/spirit/body needle one way or another. Perhaps we need something more. Or is it less? Different?

Perhaps we need Lent. Perhaps we need, want, and deserve a time set aside to empty the life/spirit/body tank so that we may be filled by something greater—holier—than ourselves. And notice the difference: we empty so that we may be filled. We do the hard work of one so that someone else can do the grace-filled work of the other.

Whether you need to do the hard, faithful work of emptying, or find yourself already on the side of a lonely road, the road that winds through Lent is exactly where you need to be. During Lent we drive as many miles as it takes to empty the tanks so that, when the engine finally dies, we look up and find we've arrived at the foot of the cross. The place where Christ takes that death upon himself and transforms it into eternal and abundant life. We empty. Christ fills. Over and over and over again.



## **Wednesday worship**

**11:30 a.m. Morning Prayer**

**7 p.m. Evening Prayer**

**March 8 – April 5**

Make room for the grace-filled, holy work of Lent by coming to mid-week worship. Scripture and sermons at these services will focus on themes from Martin Luther's Small Catechism, in observance of the 500th anniversary year of the Reformation. Pick up a copy of "Free Indeed," devotions for Lent based on the Small Catechism, in the atrium at Grace.

**Supper is served in Fellowship Hall at 6 p.m.** Thank you to the following groups for cooking:

March 8	Stephen Ministry
March 15	Slovakia Mission Team
March 22	Women of Grace
March 29	Health Cabinet
April 5	Slovakia Mission Team

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**Grace Notes** is published monthly by Grace Lutheran Church and School, 7300 Division St., River Forest, Ill. It is mailed to Grace members, parents of students at Grace School, and friends of the congregation. The newsletter is online at [www.graceriverforest.org](http://www.graceriverforest.org). This issue was mailed via U.S. Postal Service Bulk Mail on Friday, March 3, with the hope that it will arrive in your mailbox no later than March 10. Copies are also available at Grace.

**Deadlines and submissions.** The April issue of Grace Notes will be mailed on Friday, March 31. The deadline for copy is Wednesday, March 22; the issue covers events through early May. Please send news to [ggotsch@graceriverforest.org](mailto:ggotsch@graceriverforest.org). Please limit your submissions to news relating to Grace Lutheran Church and School, its mission, ministries, and the benevolences the congregation supports. Articles should be no longer than 500 words. Submissions may be edited for length, clarity, and relevance.

# WORSHIP

## SUNDAY MORNINGS

Holy Communion at 8:30 and 11 a.m.

March 5

### FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7; Psalm 32, Romans 5:12-19, Matthew 4:1-11

March 12

### SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

Genesis 12:1-4a, Psalm 121, Romans 4:1-5, 13-17, John 3:1-17

March 19

### THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

Exodus 17:1-7, Psalm 95, Romans 5:1-11, John 4:5-42

March 26

### FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

1 Samuel 16:1-13, Psalm 23, Ephesians 5:8-14, John 9:1-41

March 8, 15, 22 and 29

## LENT MID-WEEK SERVICES

Morning Prayer at 11:30 a.m., Evening Prayer at 7 p.m.

Supper in Fellowship Hall at 6 p.m.

## BACH CANTATA VESPERS

MARCH 19, 3:45 P.M.

*O heiliges Geist- und Wasserbad*

O sacred bath of water and the Holy Spirit, BWV 165

Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, homilist  
Steven Wentz, Concordia University Chicago, organist

## ELCA Bishop Elizabeth Eaton is the homilist at the March Cantata Vespers

Elizabeth Eaton, Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, will be the homilist for the Bach Cantata Vespers service on Sunday, March 19. Bishop Eaton was elected to this post in 2013. She earned a bachelor's degree in music education before earning her Master of Divinity at Harvard. She has served congregations in Ohio and was elected bishop of the ELCA Northeastern Ohio Synod in 2006.

The cantata for the service, *O heiliges Geist- und Wasserbad* (O sacred bath of water and the Holy Spirit, BWV 165), was composed by Bach for Trinity Sunday of 1715 and is related to the gospel lesson for that day from the third chapter of John. In John 3:5 Jesus says to Nicodemus, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit."

Steve Wentz of Concordia University Chicago will play the organ prelude beginning at 3:45 p.m.

## Pastoral Leadership in Worship

In March, you'll see a change in how the pastoral staff of Grace provides leadership during worship on Sunday mornings. With the arrival of Pastor Lauren and Pastor Dave, it was very important to create opportunities for them as preaching ministers and presiding ministers on a consistent basis. It was also important that I continue to do the same. Over the past four months, Pastor Lauren and Pastor Dave have had the wonderful opportunity to build their relationships with the people of Grace in worship.

Now that the Pastors Wegner have established themselves in our shared worship life, it is time to return to crafting worship in a more cohesive way. Specifically, we will be returning to the better practice of having a single presiding minister at each worship service. The presiding minister provides the focal point of leadership, moving attention away from herself or himself and toward God. Keeping the role unified in a single presiding minister also avoids creating a false division between Word and sacrament, as if they were disjointed sections of the service.

In practical terms, this means that two of the pastors will provide leadership each Sunday, one as the preaching minister and the other as the presiding minister. This will create other opportunities for the third pastor. She or he will be able to provide hospitality, engage members and visitors in conversation, tend to other ministry needs, and even sit with family. This pastor will also continue to serve Holy Communion at the 11:00 a.m. service to those who are unable to come forward during distribution.

As your senior pastor, I will continue to be the preaching minister more often than not. I will be in a worship leadership role almost every Sunday. I am grateful for the excellent leadership that Pastor Dave and Pastor Lauren will continue to provide, both within and beyond the context of worship. Pastor Costello will also continue to share his gifts as the preaching or presiding minister on occasion. It is truly a gift to be able to serve alongside three such gifted pastoral colleagues, and with all of you, in ministry at Grace.

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Dave Lyle



# ADULT EDUCATION

Come to Adult Education sessions at 9:45 a.m. on Sunday mornings for thought-provoking presentations and discussions that build faith and fellowship. Look for more information about classes and locations on the signs in the atrium.

If you have ideas or suggestions for Adult Ed programming, please contact Ted Anton, chair of the Adult Education Committee (tanton@depaul.edu).

**March 12**

## **Jesus and the Renewal of Community Life**

*Ray Pickett, Professor, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago*

The second session of a two-part series that focuses on Jesus' Galilean ministry in its turbulent political context. The Gospels describe Jesus leading a prophetic renewal movement responding to adverse social and economic effects of Herod Antipas' project of urbanization. In contrast to individualistic interpretations of Jesus' ministry, we will explore how Jesus is restoring community life from the margins.

### **Sunday Bible Study**

Led by Bob Jandeska in the conference room, the Bible study group meets every Sunday morning at 9:45 a.m. in the Conference Room on the lower level.

**March 19**

## **How a Chicago Public School Teacher Changes Lives**

*Ellie Anderson, Roberto Clemente Community Academy social science teacher*

Ellie Anderson discusses her most moving classroom experiences and how they were informed by her faith and philosophy.

**March 26, April 2**

## **Ecology and Worship**

*Ben Stewart, Gordon Braatz Professor of Worship, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago*

What do Christian worship and ecology have in common? Literally everything. Both worship and ecology extend our vision in wonder to see how the entire cosmos — everything — is interconnected and works together for good, even “very good.” This two-week series explores the ways in which Christian worship links the songs of earth and heaven .

## **Programs at Concordia and Dominican Universities**

### **Reformation Symposium**

Experts in history, theology, the fine arts and education will lead a discussion on the Reformation's impact and ongoing legacy at Concordia University on Monday, March 20, 7 p.m., in the Chapel of Our Lord. Presenters include Mickey Mattox of Marquette University, Mary Jane Haemig of Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Ron Rittgers of Valparaiso University, and Vincent Bacote, Wheaton College.

### **Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples: Theological and Pastoral Challenges**

*Michel Andraos, PhD, Associate Professor of Intercultural Theology and Ministry at Catholic Theological Union*

Tuesday, March 14, 7 p.m., Priory Auditorium, \$10

Pope Francis has repeatedly apologized to the indigenous peoples of the Americas for the church's involvement in their colonization and acknowledged the church's historic

responsibility to build a new, right relationship with them. This lecture will focus on the theology and pastoral approach needed for reconciliation and peacemaking in this context.

### **Is the Future of American Religion Already in the Past?**

*Kenneth Woodward, author, journalist*

March 19, 2 p.m., Priory Auditorium, free.

Call 708-714-9105 to preregister.

Kenneth L. Woodward's recent book *Getting Religion: Faith, Culture, and Politics from the Age of Eisenhower to the Era of Obama* is part American history and part memoir, as he writes about his years covering religion for *Newsweek* and watching religion become intertwined with politics and increasingly contentious. The book makes a strong case for Americans understanding the role faith plays in civic life. Copies will be available for purchase and signing.



# Don't worry — just introduce yourself!

"Good morning, I'm Dave! Are you new to Grace?"

"No, I've been a member here for 20 years."

"Oh, well...enjoy the service."

Absurd? Maybe not. In a congregation as large and as active as Grace there will be times when you don't know someone – even someone who has been a member for 20 years. That is okay! That person may regularly attend a different service or may be involved in other activities than the ones you're active in. He or she may take a different path through the maze of hallways in our building or sit in a different "pew neighborhood." There are many ways, times and places to worship and serve at Grace Church — a mark of a vibrant and faithful community!

But still, many of us feel anxious and worried when it comes to introducing ourselves to someone who we think might be a visitor at Grace, but who might well turn out to be a lifelong member. That anxiety may suck the wind out of our hospitable sails. And then we miss out on opportunities to get to know both guests and fellow members.

Here is an anxiety-busting suggestion: introduce yourself anyway, and don't worry about it!

"Hi, I'm Dave! I'm not sure we've met...how long have you been at Grace?"

"I'm Margaret, I've been around for 20 years."

"Really!?! Well, I can't believe we haven't crossed paths yet. So nice to finally meet you."

"Thank you! You are such a kind fellow!"

Okay, so that last bit might be a little over-the-top, but you get the idea. Remember that part of trusting God's promise of abundant relationship with us includes building relationships with one another. Practice radical welcome. Practice letting go of assumptions. Practice a bit of humility. Practice graciousness. When it comes to welcoming, let go of yourself and become like Christ who invites all to draw closer to himself and to God.

Pastor Dave Wegner

## Grace's Greeter Ministry needs volunteers

Greeters are the friendly people who say hello when you come in the doors at Grace on Sunday mornings. Greeters greet everyone--young and old, familiar faces, new faces, Grace members and visitors. Radical welcome begins with a simple "Good morning!" Contact Marge Sanger (708-453-0649; sangerml@att.net) if you'd like to give greeting a try.

## New members class begins at the end of March

The next New Members class will begin on Sunday, March 26, and continue on Sunday mornings between services through May 21. Contact Karen Christopher (708-366-2900 ext 207; kchristopher@gracriveforest.org) for more information, or if you know someone who might appreciate an invitation to join the class.

# Racism conversations: “hard, holy work”



Approximately 130 people are involved in Grace’s Lenten conversation on racism. Participants

are reading the book “Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race,” by Debbie Irving, and gathering weekly in small groups for discussion. Most groups will meet five times between now and Easter, and participants from all the groups will gather for a potluck on April 23 to share their insights and experiences and consider

what’s next.

There’s still time to join a group. Pastor Dave Wegner is leading four weekly sessions on Thursday evenings at Grace, beginning March 16, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. To sign up, email or call Gwen Gotsch at Grace (708-366-6900, ext. 122; [ggotsch@gracriverforest.org](mailto:ggotsch@gracriverforest.org)).

If you are not able to participate in a small group discussion at this time, you can still be a part of Grace’s larger conversation about racism at Grace Church. Consider reading “Waking Up White” on your own. The author provides questions that invite reflection at the end of every chapter, or download the Participant Guide from the Grace website. You may wish to explore other books and resources. A list of additional titles and

## Additional books on racism and white privilege

Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*

Joseph Barndt, *Dismantling Racism*

Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*

Debby Irving, *Waking Up White*

Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy: The Story of Justice and Redemption*.

Jim Wallace, *America’s Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege and the Bridge to a New America*.

helpful websites is posted on the Grace website. It’s a “living list” and will be expanded in the weeks ahead.

The people who are leading the book discussion groups were commissioned in our worship services on Sunday, February 26. They include: Reggie and Miriam Moore, James and Amy Claud, Susie and Dick Calhoun, Jennie Luebbe and Felicia Niermann, Eunice Eifert, Lance and Stephanie Wilkening, David Heim and Barbara Hofmaier, Diane Moses, Kim and Carl Kernodle, Ellie Anderson, and Tom Kay.

We will continue to pray for these small groups and this project during worship services in Lent, as well as for all who suffer because of racial injustice.

The Lenten journey of repentance provides an appropriate framework for learning about the persistence of racism in America. But that is the gift of holding these conversations in the context of our faith community. AS Pastor Lyle said in his sermon on February 26, Transfiguration Sunday:

This is hard, holy work, but it is also ministry of which we need not be afraid. And on this day when we hear again of the glorious, dazzling brightness and whiteness of God’s transfigured Son, it is important to name that we are not hearing an affirmation of the goodness or the privilege of whiteness over and against darker hues. The light that shines through Jesus is not a light that values one group of people instead of another. Rather, it is the illuminating light in which we are finally invited to see the truth — the truth about our own complicity in the sinfulness and racism of this world, the truth that God’s light shines out over all creation and all people, and the truth that there is now a light to enable us to see a better way forward — a way, Jesus’ way, that is meant for all people so that here, here in the valleys of real life, we can be drawn closer to God and draw closer to one another.

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH  
ST. JOHN  
PASSION

April 8, 7 p.m. and April 9, 4 p.m.

Bach Cantata Vespers Chorus and Orchestra  
*in collaboration with Chicago Choral Artists*

Michael D. Costello, director  
Hoss Brock, tenor (Evangelist)  
Keven Keys, baritone (Jesus)

Susan Nelson, soprano  
Karen Brunssen, mezzo-soprano  
Patrick Muehleise, tenor  
Douglas Anderson, baritone

Performed without intermission  
Free admission ■ \$25 Suggested Donation ■ Childcare available

# Find your treasure and your heart here at Grace

*“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Matthew 6:21*

What do you think of when you hear the word “treasure?” The word may have different meanings for each of us. Most often, our treasures are those intangible things we hold most dear — our family and friends, moments in time, our faith, our church.

Grace Church is a treasure. We treasure God’s word, the sermon messages and music at Grace, our friends and pew neighbors, the laughter and fellowship, the opportunities to help others. We treasure the ministry here at Grace and the ministry work that happens outside of our church walls.

With this gift, this treasure, also comes a responsibility to support our ministry and investments at Grace. As we approach our annual Faith Promise Commitment, please consider your pledge commitment for the church calendar year 2017-2018.

Our kick-off for Faith Promise Commitments is Sunday, April 2. In the coming weeks look for more Grace stories that highlight our ministries and opportunities to serve.

The Stewardship Committee

## Books for Lenten prayer and reflection



In March we begin the annual Lenten journey toward Easter. Look for these and other inspirational books for the Lenten season in the atrium display case and the library.

*Cross Examinations: Readings on the Meaning of the Cross*, ed. Marit Trelstadd. Fortress, 2006. [232.9 CRO]

*Meditations on the Cross*, by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, ed. Manfred Weber, tr. Douglas W Scott. Westminster Knox, 1996. [232.96 BON]

*A Violent Grace*, by Michael Card. Multnomah Press, 2000. Poems and essays focusing on the Cross as both the scene of the violent execution of Jesus and as the source of God’s limitless grace. [232.96 CAR]

*In the Shadow of the Cross: The Deeper Meaning of Calvary*, by Ray Pritchard. Broadman and Holman, 2001. [232.96 PRI]

*Reliving the Passion: Meditations on the Suffering, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus, as Recorded in Mark*, by Walter Wangerin, Jr. Zondervan, 1992. [232.96.WAN]

*Bread and Wine: Readings for Lent and Easter*. Orbis Books, 2005. Meditations from well-known spiritual writers. [234.34 BRE]

*Never Never Said a Mumbalin Word: Lenten Meditations on the Spirituals*, by Mark Francisco Bozutti-Jones. Augsburg Fortress, 2002. [242.34 BOZ]

*Show Me the Way: Readings for Each Day of Lent*, by Henri J. M. Nouwen. Crossroad, 1992. [242.34 NOU]

*Windows of Grace*. Grace Lutheran Church and School, 2014. Pages 108–9, 139-45. [770 WIN]

*Hymns for All Saints: Lent, Easter, Pentecost*. Concordia, 2006. [CD 782.27 HYM]

Volunteers staff the library on Sunday mornings. It is open for self-service during the week. All are welcome to check out books. Please ask the person at the reception desk for assistance with books in the atrium case.

# Spiritual practices: “Gym for the soul”

By Sue Ames, Parish Nurse

In his book “Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?” Philip Yancey notes that St. Augustine described the Psalms as “a gymnasium for the soul.” Did you ever think of your soul as needing exercise, as your body does?

Following specific spiritual practices during Lent is like a gym for the soul, a workout that helps us lead healthier, more faithful spiritual lives. As we practice being more aware of our need for God and of God’s presence with us, we also open up our lives to be more available to the work of God’s kingdom and to serving others. As we practice spiritual disciplines alongside other Christians, we receive encouragement, hope and grace, and are knit together as the community of God.

Christian spiritual disciplines are part of a long tradition of workouts for the soul. An online article titled “Learning to Throw a Spiritual Practices Punch” at Church Health Reader ([www.chreader.org](http://www.chreader.org)) compares spiritual disciplines to a training regimen:

Like a boxer skipping rope to increase endurance, or lifting weights to gain strength, spiritual practices help us to prepare for the life of God to flow through us in everyday aspects of our lives and well-being.

## The discipline of reflection and prayer

Setting aside time each day for prayer and meditation may already be a part of your daily Lenten practice. You may be reading the devotions in “Free Indeed,” the booklet available here at church. There are many other resources available to guide daily scripture reading, including books in the Grace Church library (see p. 7). Take time to listen as you read, to reflect on what God is saying to you and what the words mean for your life and faith journey.

Just as Jesus traveled the long journey to the cross, walking can be an act of spiritual and physical devotion. Begin with scripture, set a movement goal or a reasonable physical challenge for yourself, and use the repetitive motion of walking to focus your thoughts on God’s words to you and Jesus’ sacrifice for us.

## Fasting in order to direct our attention to God and others

*“O God, you are my God, I seek you and my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.”*  
*Psalms 63:1*

Traditional Christian spiritual practices can be grouped into those that involve abstinence (giving up something) and those that are about engagement (doing something). Choosing to give up something for Lent helps us pay attention to the way we are ruled by our appetites, how we use food, money, or screen time to anesthetize ourselves and avoid acknowledging our deeper need

for God’s kingdom. The spiritual discipline of fasting is often linked with almsgiving: the money saved by forgoing a treat or a meal is shared with others, especially with those who are suffering. In this way fasting directs our disordered longing for comfort toward the gifts of God’s kingdom.

In a book titled “Gospel: Recovering the Power that Made Christianity Revolutionary,” J. D. Greear writes:

The gospel has done its work in us when we crave God more than we crave everything else in life--more than money, romance, family, health, fame--and when seeing his kingdom advance in the lives of others gives us more joy than anything we could own.

In our American culture we often think more highly of those who are waited on and served by others than we do of those who do the lowly work of serving. Yet this is not the example Jesus set for us. Seeking out opportunities to practice being more other-centered is another kind of spiritual discipline for Lent.

I hope that you will use the six weeks of Lent as a time to exercise your soul. Make a plan for spiritual exercise just as you would for physical exercise. Give some thought to

your needs, schedule and preferences. Search “Lenten spiritual practices” online for inspiration and ideas. Or take advantage of the many opportunities for practicing spiritual disciplines in community here at Grace.

As Henri Nouwen writes in “Making All Things New: An Invitation to the Spiritual Life”:

A spiritual discipline is necessary in order to move slowly from an absurd to an obedient life, from a life filled with noisy worries to a life in which there is some free inner space where we can listen to our God and follow his guidance.

## New: Health-Wise Wellness Class

Fourth Tuesday of the month in March, April and May

First session: March 28, 1-2:30 p.m. in the church library  
Topic: “Become a Wise Health Consumer,” including:

- Choosing a physician
- Insurance basics
- Preparing for medical appointments
- Information to have on file
- Health records and your rights
- Wellness promotion
- Money saving tips

Call or email Sue Ames, Parish Nurse for more information  
(708-366-6900 ext 219; [sames@gracecreekforest.org](mailto:sames@gracecreekforest.org)).





# Grace School celebrates Lutheran Schools Week

**Lutheran Schools Week.** Grace School is celebrating Lutheran Schools Week, Monday through Friday, March 13–17. This is the week leading up to A Graceful Evening, the March 18 dinner-auction that supports the school’s operating budget.

The week is full of special activities planned by Grace teachers and parents, including a hot lunch shared by chapel buddies, a service project, a faculty versus 8th grade volleyball game, and a Friday pep rally with Alumni Award recipient Dena El Saffar’s band. There are special dress-up days during the week as well. On Friday students are invited to dress either as Mr. Mortensen, or in an outfit from a decade when Mr. Mortensen was at Grace School—which means anything from the 1960s to the present! Lyle Mortensen will be retiring from his position at Grace as technology teacher at the end of this school year.

Students will also be encouraged to support the Fund-A-Need auction for A Graceful Evening with their donations. Last year Grace School were enthusiastic participants in the Fund-A-Need project and raised several hundred dollars for STEM, mostly in loose change.

Grace School students are also involved in creating auction items for A Graceful Evening. The sun-catchers made by second graders are sure to be parent favorites!

**Enrollment for 2017-18.** If you are interested in enrolling a student in Grace School, or if you would like to know more about preschool, junior and senior kindergarten and elementary programs at Grace, please call the school office (708-366-6900) and set up an appointment to tour the school and meet with principal Bill Koehne.

## Enjoy Family Fun Night and the Chili Cook-Off on March 10

Family Fun Friday joins up with Grace School’s Fourth Annual All-School Chili Cook-Off on March 10, 6–8 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Use the link at [GraceRiverForest.org](http://GraceRiverForest.org) to sign up to bring chili, bread, sides, dessert or beverages. Prizes will be awarded for the best chilis.

After dinner, Family Fun Friday activities commence with a bird house craft project and open gym for kids age 6 and up. Younger kids, ages 3-5, will have supervised activities in the Extended Day Care room provided by the Grace Church Slovakia Mission Team. (Support their mission trip with a donation!)

## Young adult gathering at Kinslahger Brewing Company

Join other Grace young adults for an informal gathering on **Thursday, March 23 at 7 p.m. at Kinslahger**, 6806 Roosevelt, Oak Park.. Come and go as you please, and feel free to bring friends along. Contact Pastor Lauren ([lwegner@graceriverforest.org](mailto:lwegner@graceriverforest.org)) with questions or for more details.

## Hear Bach’s cello suites at Grace, Sunday, March 12, 3 p.m.

J. S. Bach’s six suites for unaccompanied cello, BWV 1007-1012, are considered to be among the most profound of all classical music works. One musicologist described them as “music wherein a man has created a dance of God.” With a single musical line, Bach achieves the effect of three or four parts working in harmony.

You can hear all six cello suites on Sunday, March 12, in a free concert presented here at Grace. The concert begins at 3 pm., with Suites 1 through 3. There will be refreshments and a talk at 4:30 p.m., followed by Suites 4 though 6 at 5 p.m. Six cellists are participating in the performance, which is sponsored by the Chicago Cello Society.



## GRACE NEWS

**SANDWICH-MAKING AT FRATERNITÉ.** Grace members will be packing lunches at Fraternité Notre Dame, 502 N. Central, on Monday, March 20, at 7 p.m. These lunches are given to people in need in the Austin community. Children and teens are welcome with their parents. Contact Kate Hogenson (hogenson@msn.com) to arrange a ride.

**KNITTING/CROCHETING GROUP** meets on Tuesday, March 21, 1–2:30 p.m. in the church library. Contact Margaret Burke (mrburke42@gmail.com) for more information.

**LECTIO DIVINA** meets on Monday, March 27, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. in the church library. Contact MaryBeth Buschmann (marybeth1942@sbcglobal.net).

**RETIRED LEADERS AND OTHERS** meet on March 14, 10 a.m., in the church library to hear Pastor Said Allabouni speak on “My Journey as a Palestinian Israeli ELCA Pastor.” The Retired Leaders group meets on the second Tuesday of every month at Grace for informal presentations on a wide range of faith-related topics. Everyone is welcome to attend.

**GRACE NOTES MAILING CREW.** A lively crew of volunteers led by Marlene Hallman gathers monthly in the church library to prepare Grace Notes for mailing. They will be at work on the March newsletter on Thursday, March 30, at 9:30 a.m. They welcome more helpers!

**CORNERSTONES BIBLE STUDY.** Older adults meet in the church library on Wednesdays. Come for food and fellowship at 10 a.m. and Bible study led by the pastors at 10:30. On Wednesdays in Lent (through April 5), there are services of Morning Prayer at 11:30 a.m. Lunch is served after worship on March 15 and 29.

**ROMEOS AND JULIETS** meet in the church library at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, March 21, for a presentation and the usual donuts, coffee and Trivial Pursuit.

**FINDING HOPE,** the chronic illness support group, meets at Grace at 7:15 p.m. on Tuesday, March 7, and again on April 4, at 7:15 p.m.

**RELIGION IN LITERATURE.** The book discussion group meets on Friday, March 17, at 8 p.m. Karen Clapp and Art Hackett will lead the discussion of “Tenth of December,” a collection of short stories by George Saunders. The discussion will concentrate on six stories: “Victory Lap,” “Sticks,” “Puppy,” “Exhortation,” “Semplica Girls,” and “Tenth of December.” The hosts are Jeff and Claudia Wood. A copy of the book is available in the church library. All are welcome.

**REEL TALK,** the film discussion group, meets on Friday, March 10, at 6 p.m. in the church library to watch “Postia Pappi Jaakobille” (Letters to Father Jacob). This highly praised Finnish film tells the story of healing and redemption in the life of Leila, a pardoned convict who becomes an assistant to a blind priest.

**DAYTIME BUILDING HOURS DURING SPRING BREAK.** The building will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., March 27 to 31, when Grace School is on spring break and will reopen for evening activities.

## PRAYERS

**PRAYER LIST.** The weekly Prayer List can be found in the worship bulletin on Sunday. Contact Karen Christopher (kchristopher@gracriverforest.org; 708-366-6900 ext 207) to be included on the published prayer list.

**PRAYER CHAIN.** Contact Kathy Lucht (kathy.lucht@gmail.com) or Kathy Garness (708-366-7584; KMGfinearts@comcast.net) with confidential prayer chain requests.

## ALTAR FLOWERS

**Sign up** at the reception desk to donate flowers to remember a loved one or commemorate a special birthday or anniversary. Flowers are not placed in the chancel during Lent, but you may sign up now for Sundays after Easter and through the summer.

## THANK YOU

**From the Modrich family:** Please accept our sincere gratitude for your prayers, blessings, visits, meals, and support these many weeks. We all feel the love and strength of the Grace community each day.

Joe, Julie, Stefan, Anna,  
Katarina and Peter Modrich

## PASTORAL CARE

Call 708-689-3032 for emergency pastoral care on weekends, or when the Grace building is closed. Please include a return phone number if you leave a message or send a text.

## Daylight Saving Time

Daylight saving time begins at 2 a.m. on Sunday, March 12. Set your clock ahead an hour when you go to bed on Saturday night.

# Alumni Awards at A Graceful Evening will recognize a physician and musicians who attended Grace School

Neurologist Ryan Uitti ('74) and musicians Dena ('86) and Amir ('91) ElSaffar will receive Grace School's Alumni Award at A Graceful Evening, the annual benefit for Grace School, Saturday, March 18, 6 p.m. at the Oak Park Country Club. Reservations (\$75/person, \$700 for a table of ten) are available at [GraceRiverForest.org](http://GraceRiverForest.org).

**Dr. Uitti**, professor and consultant in the Department of Neurology at Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, Florida, is an international expert on Parkinson's disease and other movement disorders. He has had an active research career and has published more than 300 peer-reviewed manuscripts, book chapters, and editorials. Dr. Uitti served on the initial and current editorial board for the journal *Parkinsonism & Related Disorders* and also serves as Associate Editor for *Neurology*, a position he has held since 2006. The former chair of the Department of Neurology and Medical Director for Development at Mayo Clinic in Florida, he now serves as the Deputy Director of the Mayo Clinic Robert D. and Patricia E. Kern Center for the Science of Health Care Delivery, an activity which involves Mayo Clinic locations in Minnesota, Arizona and Florida.

**Dena ElSaffar** began learning the violin at Grace School with JoAnn Rehkopf as her teacher. She is of Iraqi and American heritage. At age 17, completely engaged in classical music, she accompanied her father to Baghdad and became enchanted by the music of Iraq and the Middle East. In 1993, while obtaining a classical music degree from Indiana University, she founded the group Salaam, a Middle Eastern music ensemble in which versatile musicians move effortlessly between Eastern and Western styles. The group has performed



throughout the United States. Ms. ElSaffar plays the viola, violin, joza and kemanche and has played with Central Eurasian ensembles, salsa groups, bluegrass, blues and rock bands. She is the older sister of Amir ElSaffar, is married to percussionist Tim Moore, and is the mother of two: Jamil and Layla.

Trumpeter, santur player, vocalist, and composer **Amir ElSaffar** is a master of diverse musical traditions, combining Middle Eastern musical languages with jazz and other styles of contemporary music. His first musical experience was singing for worship here at Grace School. He is an expert trumpeter and played with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. He has traveled to the Middle East and Europe to study the modal Maqam tradition and currently leads

four critically acclaimed ensembles: Two Rivers, which combines the musical languages and instrumentation of Iraqi Maqam and contemporary jazz; the Amir ElSaffar Quintet, performing ElSaffar's microtonal compositions with standard jazz instrumentation; Safaafir, the only ensemble in the US performing and preserving the Iraqi Maqam in its traditional format; and The Alwan Ensemble, the resident ensemble of Alwan for the Arts in New York, where ElSaffar is the Music Curator. He has performed at the Newport Jazz Festival and at festivals throughout Europe, as well as in New York and Chicago. Recent recordings include *Crisis* (2015) with Two Rivers and *Alchemy* (2013) recorded with his Quintet. Listen online at [www.amirelsaffar.com](http://www.amirelsaffar.com).

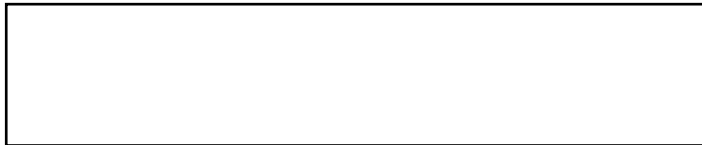
# Support and celebrate Grace School at A Graceful Evening



Oak Park Country Club  
2001 Thatcher Ave.  
River Grove

- Cocktails and dinner
- Live and silent auctions
- Alumni awards
- Informal after-party with music and dancing
- Fun and fellowship with the church
- and school community

**RESERVE YOUR SEATS**  
\$75/person  
\$700/table of ten  
Go to [GraceRiverForest.org](http://GraceRiverForest.org)



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