

July 2009

Letter of Grace

Grace Lutheran Church, ELCA

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Ann Hughes, Adult Choir Director
Karen Johnson, Youth Choir Director
& Chime Choir Director
Lynn Hess, The School of Grace
Director

Our Mission:

"As Christ clearly calls us, we seek the fullness of life in Christ for all people by:
Worshiping and praising God;
Supporting, nurturing, and equipping each other and our congregation;
Serving people in need in our community and world;
Witnessing to all in the name of Christ."



July 4th

From the Pastor...

One of my brothers used to enjoy saying: "You know? I like July because it starts with a "BANG!"

When the children in my family were younger, our parents would take us on July 4th to Faith, North Carolina for one of the best Fourth of July celebrations in the state. It would start with a fly-over by fighter jets from Seymour Johnson Air Force Base and a huge parade with floats, bands, clowns, political dignitaries. Then we would head for the park in the center of town that had carnival rides and lots of food (hot dogs, cotton candy, barbequed chicken, and much more). We would stay the entire day; then, as it got dark, we would gather around a large field and watch one of the best fireworks displays that I had ever seen! That's what my brother meant when he said July started with a bang.

You know? As I looked at the July Calendar in this newsletter, I noticed that July at Grace begins with a "BANG!" Right out of the chute comes Camp Agape on June 29 through July 3. This year, Grace members and their friends will be joined by children from Lutheran Family Services. Then, Confirmation Camp the next week. Then, the following week comes "Camp Grace" for our senior high students. Then, at the end of the month comes a very unique Vacation Bible School opportunity for Grace members and PLM Families Together. The theme is "Lost...NOT!!!" focusing on parables of Jesus. We express our deepest appreciation to all the volunteers who are allowing time this summer to make all of these events happen.

In the midst of all that will be Summer Sunday School for children, youth and adults; thirteen children and youth will attend summer camp; the Stewardship will offer a summer reading opportunity; Ann Hughes and Jay Goldfinch will be married at Grace, and our 8:15 AM and 11:00 worship services will continue provide opportunities for us to gather around Word and Sacrament.

While many of you will be vacationing throughout the summer, I hope that you will take advantage of the many opportunities for learning, fellowship and worship that are being made available. Summer is not only a time for relaxation; it is also a time for renewal. Let's make use of every opportunity that we have for both! God bless you and keep you safe!

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Michael

Mini-VBS

Grace will be hosting PLM-Families Together for a combined mini-Vacation Bible School. The mini-VBS will be held from 6:30-8:00pm Wed., July 29 through Fri., July 31. Each evening will begin with supper at 6:30pm. Classes and activities will begin at 7:00pm. PLM will be offering Life Skills classes for its residents. There will be classes and activities for children age 3 through those who have completed grade 5.

The theme "Lost...NOT!!!" will focus on Jesus' parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin and God's persistent searching for us.

Many volunteers are needed, and this is a great opportunity to reach out to others. Please see AIM Ellen to volunteer. Help is also needed with food preparation and serving.



Summer Sunday School

Sunday school for children and youth will not meet Sunday, July 5. On July 12, Melissa Irgens and Katie DeArmitt will continue their class with the preschool and kindergarten students. Their class begins in the sanctuary. Kim Moser will meet with the high school students in the library. Leon and Carolyn Moser will meet with the middle school students in the Miller Building. Children in grades 1-5 will meet in one of the classrooms. (Classes are divided by the grades recently completed.) Children from preschool through grade 5 will be looking at Bible stories of faith.



The Augsburg Bible class with Dan Baker and Lois Jean Query will meet as usual. Students in John Hermann's class and in the LAFS class should consult their leaders as to their summer schedules.

Fun at Summer Camp

During summer of 2009 Grace will have 13 youth attending programs at ELCA camps. These include Lutheridge in Arden, NC and Camp Agape in Fuquay-Varina, NC. These include Deanna Loesch, Ally Kohl, Maggie Murphy, Amanda Kohl, Corrie Ingall, Sara Yeh, Jacob Secor, Mallory Secor, Danny Secor, Danny Cabrera, Scott Johnson, and Garrett Hess. These 12 will attend regular program offered by the camps.



During the week of July 5 – 10, Hannah Jablonski will be attending confirmation camp with AIM Ellen. Grace partners with congregations from North Carolina and Virginia to provide a week's confirmation experience that focuses on the promise that is made in confirmation. The cluster that Grace participates in is called WIGIAT. The name stands for "Where is God in all this?" and forms a basis for the studies.

Christian Symbol

Crook

The shepherd's crook is a symbol for Jesus, the Good shepherd. "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (John 10:11). The crook also symbolizes the shepherds who visited the baby Jesus in Bethlehem. It's also used in connection with King David, who had been a shepherd when he was young.



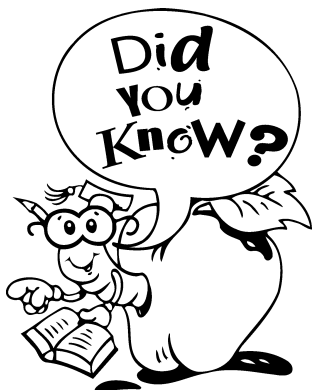
Bible Quiz

A follower of Jesus traveled the world, spreading the Good News of Christ. While in Athens, Greece, he saw an altar with an inscription that read "To an unknown god." Who was the follower?

- A. Mark
- B. Peter
- C. Paul
- D. Luke



For the answer see Acts 17:23-26, NRSV.



PLM Families Together (PLMFT)

That Pan Lutheran Ministries, now known as **PLM Families Together (PLMFT)**, is the leading provider of housing services to homeless families in Wake County, and that our congregation was instrumental in its founding twenty eight years ago?

PLMFT's MISSION SINCE 1980: "Helping homeless families reach independence"

- Provide housing and empowering supportive services to homeless families
- Engage volunteers in meaningful ways
- Advocate with and for homeless people

WHY PLMFT IS UNIQUE: Families are housed for 3-4 months in 28 individual apartments at two apartment complex locations that are integrated into residential neighborhoods. This arrangement maximizes privacy, allows PLMFT to accommodate any blend of family members, helps children and teens in those families have as "normal" a living experience as possible, and increases families' successful and quick return to stable housing in the community. The program has an 80% success rate – 80% of families who complete the program move into stable housing and graduates are followed and served for up to one year in "after care" to help prevent a return to homelessness. PLMFT is one of very few housing options for homeless families with fathers and teenage boys, and is the only program with 3-bedroom units for large families. Families receive professional social work services from a team of "Mentor Advocates," who help families set clear goals building on strengths, focus on increasing income through employment, and connect families to resources and programs in the community that they can continue to access once they graduate from PLMFT into permanent housing. Families must save in an escrow account, to build financial discipline. Families participate in regular life skills classes hosted by local churches, and children receive special attention through the After School Program.

If you would like to know more about PLMFT's unique history, on-going programs, ways you can be involved, or how to make a donation, check out the brand new beautiful website at www.plmft.org.

And here's an easy, new way to help if you would like to:

Occasionally, volunteers are needed to make minor repairs or pick up donated furniture. You can sign up on the MoversAndFixers email list and when something needs to be done, you'll receive an email describing what and when. Then if you're willing, able and available, you can sign up; if not, no commitment, no guilt (and no worries - this doesn't happen very often, so your inbox will not be overrun!) If you'd like to serve and need flexibility, send an email to Volunteer@PLMFT.org and say I'd like to be a MoverAndFixer!

Dick McCarty and Mike Peery, Grace Lutheran Church Representatives, PLMFT Board of Directors



Making the Connections

Julie Aageson, director, Eastern North Dakota Resource Center, Fargo, N.D. wrote in the May / June Seeds for the Parish "The best thing I've EVER come across about worship and evangelism and what it means to be a welcoming people is from Gordon Lathrop: "Make the center strong, make the symbols large, make the words of Christ clear, make the center accessible, make the circle large, make the periphery permeable." These words were shared by Lathrop at a 1994 conference on worship and evangelism called "Making the Connections."

There are many factors that influence whether an individual chooses to attend a church and to join that church. The visibility, accessibility and appearance of the church, the quality of the nursery program and facilities, the flow of the worship program and how easy or difficult it is for a first time visitor to follow, understand, and participate and the way that visitors are welcomed are just a few. If we accept that, both as members and committees, we share the common objectives of bringing people to Christ and sustaining them in the faith then how we work together is critical to our effectiveness. A church is ONE BODY made of many parts. Many parts, even though they are clothed in one garment, cannot be said to be truly one body if they are not working together.

"The Evangelism Committee of Grace Lutheran Church seeks the fullness of life in Christ for all people by working with the Pastors and other church committees..."

— submitted by Dan Baker

Evangelism Committee Report



Due to dangerous weather conditions the April meeting was rescheduled until after the deadline for the last Monthly Letter of Grace. Therefore this report covers both the April and May meetings.

The fall Alpha class is scheduled to begin September 15. If you would like to participate, invite a guest, or support this worthwhile program please contact Helen Hauser (854-9264).

The church brochure has been updated and republished. The new brochure is available through the church office and in the new Welcome Packets.

Helen Hauser has completed the new Welcome Packets and they are now available at the Welcome Desk in the narthex. The Evangelism Committee is currently considering ways to ensure that Guests and Visitors are provided with a Visitors Packet on their first visit to Grace.

The Guest and Visitor Follow-up Program has been revitalized. Processes are in place to track the history of guests and visitors. A spreadsheet has been implemented and Jan Decker is doing an outstanding job in capturing names and contact information from the Pew Pads and the Guest Registry book and updating the spreadsheet. Letters are being sent to first time guests and visitors each week and calls are being made to first time visitors who are local and might be looking for a church to join. The attendance history of Guests and Visitors is being reviewed regularly and based on attendance or an indication in the pew pad that the Guest/Visitor is looking for a church home the family/individual is personally contacted by the Pastor regarding interest in the a New Members' class. An effort is being made to increase the number of guests and visitors who provide contact information. Currently, we are averaging 3-5 first time visitors each week but only capturing contact information on 40% of them.

A new Ushers' Worksheet has been implemented. This sheet provides a checklist of tasks that Ushers are responsible for each week, a place for them to make recommendations/comments, and a place to record total attendance at each worship service. The Ushers are no longer required to check off the members in attendance.

The survey taken during the Every Member Household Contact indicated that many members of Grace are interested in receiving the Monthly Letter of Grace though email. Karen and George Drakulic are putting together a feasibility plan on making this available as an option.

The Evangelism Committee continues to pursue self-education on the topics of evangelism and church membership. We have recently reviewed an article from the ELCA publication "Seeds of the Faith" on being a welcoming congregation. We are currently reviewing a hypothetical lifeline of significant church related events from the time someone becomes aware of a church and progressing through first visit, membership, inactivity and leaving the church. This study is aimed at the development of a "New Member Care" program.

Most of the key influencers of whether a person/family joins a church or not are the primary responsibilities of other committees within the church. Such things as church appearance, resources/programs for children/youth, church visibility, and the characteristics of the worship service are critical to being perceived as an inviting and welcoming congregation. Evangelism is working to improve awareness of how committees can more effectively work together, communicate needs and priorities related to the mission of the church and support one another in accomplishing that mission.

The current timetable is to have the Evangelism programs necessary for welcoming visitors and following up with them in place by the end of August. During its August meeting the Evangelism Committee will begin focusing on ways to be more inviting and to increase the number of visitors each week. The objective is to significantly increase the number of new visitors each week as we proceed into the holiday season.

All of this requires more time and effort than the current members of the Evangelism Committee are able to provide. Please contact Dan Baker at 847-8688 or dbaker@nc.rr.com for further information or to become involved.

— submitted by Dan Baker

Stewardship Committee



“God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

The Stewardship Committee is enthusiastically making preparations for activities leading to Commitment Sunday on October 11, our annual opportunity to make a pledge of financial support to the mission of Grace Congregation. As our most recent committee meeting was about to come to a close I turned to Pastor Michael and asked, “You’ll be giving a stewardship sermon, right?”

His gentle straight forward reply was “Of course..., I do that every Sunday.” As I left the meeting his words hit home. I had been thinking that stewardship is just about money but it is actually about so much more.

Christian Stewardship is our acknowledgement that God is Creator and all that we are and all that we have comes from Him. Stewardship is our response to God’s promise found in John 3:16 in ways large and small. For example, faithful stewardship is when Allyson and Cody get up early to serve as acolyte and crucifer at the 8:15 a.m. service; it’s men and women cleaning up the church grounds on Saturday morning; it’s John or Lois Jean or Dan spending evenings preparing Sunday School lessons; it’s moms and dads taking time for bedtime prayer with their children; it’s the Christian businessman dealing honestly and openly with a client even during tough financial times; it’s working for peace here and abroad; it’s Lynn with her arms around a frightened child on the first day at the School of Grace; it’s bringing canned goods for North Raleigh Ministries; it’s writing an offering check before paying the other monthly expense bills; it’s Jan working late in order to finish the Letter of Grace; it’s sitting quietly beside someone grieving the loss of a loved one; it’s the Amazing Graces making quilts to be shipped around the world; it’s Hilary on a mission trip to inner city Philadelphia; and the list could go on and on. Simply put, Christian stewardship includes all the concrete ways that we live out what we believe. It’s faith in action. When we obey the commandments to put God first and to love our neighbor as we would love ourselves, we are practicing Christian stewardship.

We’re fortunate at Grace. The stewardship opportunities are many and varied; from pounding nails at a Habitat house to stuffing envelopes; from helping with the senior high mission trip to serving in the Food Pantry, from singing in the choir to helping homeless families through PLM. Perhaps as you listen to Pastor Michael’s stewardship sermon next Sunday, you’ll consider some new or additional ways of responding to God’s loving promises.

We pray: Almighty Creator, because you loved me first, help me to respond by loving you with all my heart, my soul and my strength. In Your Son’s Name, Amen.



Don’t Miss This Summer Reading Oppor-

Tired of the same old historical novels, spy tales and “who done its”? Your Stewardship Committee invites you pick up a copy of *Giving to God: The Bible’s Good News about Living a Generous Life* by Mark Allan Powell. Just sign up in the narthex during July and you’ll receive a copy.

Giving to God is an informative, concise and practical guide for using the treasures, material and other gifts that God has given us. The book shows Christians the way to a better life and a better relationship with their money and with God. Powell presents stewardship as an act of worship, an expression of faith and a disciple for spiritual growth. Faithful use of our time, talents, and money starts with a deep, satisfying relationship with the God to whom we belong. We can then learn, says Powell, to give gladly and generously out of our heartfelt connection with God.

Mark Allan Powell is a Bible scholar and theologian widely recognized for his work in spiritual formation and congregational ministries. The Robert and Phyllis Leatherman Professor of New Testament Studies at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio, he is the author of nearly twenty books, including *Loving Jesus* and the massive *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Christian Music*.

PLM Families Together, Inc.



School Supplies—Ongoing Need—PLMFT residents attend various year round and traditional schools. Year round schools start in July. An ongoing need for our residents are school supplies. We are seeking donations of new backpacks, paper, pencils, notebooks, pens, construction paper, pencil sharpeners, glue sticks, highlighters, etc.

Service Opportunities for Groups - PLMFT has a wide variety of service opportunities to help homeless families for youth groups, Scout troops, confirmands-mentors, civic and other organizations at both of our Raleigh locations as well as ones that can be done at your own facility. We are currently scheduling events for the 2009-2010 school calendar year. Please send an email to volunteer@plmft.org for more information or check out our website at www.plmft.org.

Service with no strings...PLMFT is looking for people who are handy with tools or willing to transport furniture to sign up for our handyman email list. Occasionally, we need volunteers to make minor repairs or pick up donated furniture, etc. Sign up on our MoversAndFixers email list and when something needs to be done, we'll send out an email describing what and when. Then if you're willing, able and available, you can sign up; if not, no commitment, no guilt. (And no worries - this doesn't happen very often, so your inbox will not be overrun!) If you'd like to serve and need flexibility, send an email to volunteer@plmft.org and say I'd like to be a MoverAndFixer!

We have many other opportunities for service, for individuals, families, or groups. To learn about our volunteer opportunities, please attend our next **Journey Day** on July 21 at 8:00 a.m. or contact Sue Holland at volunteer@plmft.org.

FIELDTRIP! — Thanks to a generous donation through the North Carolina Theatre's Share the Stars program, PLMFT received tickets to High School Musical 2 at Raleigh Memorial Auditorium. The Share the Stars program is designed to expose children in need to the unique American art form of musical theatre. Our residents, young and old, enjoyed this musical production!

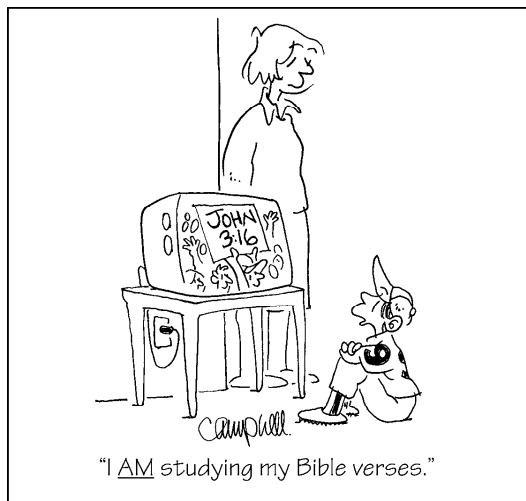


My family and I are deeply grateful for the many prayers and concerns for my daughter, Carolyn, during her illness and for the contributions and many beautiful cards after her passing. It has been, and is, a very difficult time and your support has been overwhelming, as has been the help and support of Pastor Michael.

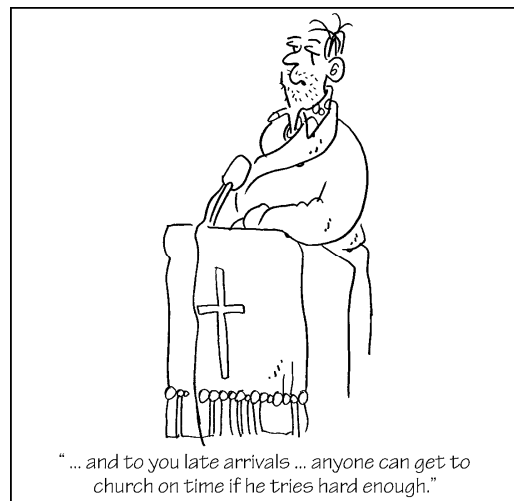
— God bless you, Margaret Winter

Congratulations to ...

Adam Melvin and **Elizabeth Lynch** who were united in marriage at Grace Lutheran Church on Saturday, June 6th. God bless and keep you as you begin your life together as husband and wife.



On a Lighter Note



**Grace Lutheran
Church Leadership**

Council

President

Vic Lebsock
(847-1360)

Vice President

Suzanne Hagen
(781-7561)

Secretary/

Communications

Eric Kohl

Treasurer

Ray Gerald

Evangelism

Eric Kohl

Fellowship

Jill Nobles

Finance

Ray Gerald

Long-Range Planning

Tom Thompson

Member Care

Christine Camp

Property

Mike Loesch

Sheep & Goats

Peter Hauser

Stewardship

Steve Dieckhaus

Teaching & Learning

Leon Moser

Worship

Suzanne Hagen

Youth

Ty Freeman

Committee Chairs

Evangelism

Dan Baker

Fellowship

Joan Fitzgerald, Jill Nobles

Long Range Planning

Tom Thompson

Member Care

Donna Lebsock

Property

Barbara Irene

Sheep & Goats

Wayne Cornelius

Stewardship

John Hefner

Teaching & Learning

(Vacant)

SS Superintendent

We Believe in Prayer
Prayers the past month



For praise and thanksgiving...

Mark, ELCA Presiding Bishop, Leonard, our Synod Bishop, for Pr. Michael, AIM Ellen, and for all pastors, teachers, and leaders in the Church
The ministries of this congregation, The School of Grace, PLM-Families Together, North Raleigh Ministries, Helen Wright Center, Meals on Wheels, Food Bank, Kairos Outside, Alpha, Alliance Medical Ministries, Urban Ministries, Open Door Clinic, Joy of Discovery Lutheran Church, Gracepoint Lutheran Church in Pittsboro, Living Spirit Lutheran Church, The Universal Christian Church of Haiti
Our Prayer Partner Congregation, Christ Lutheran Church, Stanley, NC
The President, Congress and Supreme Court of the United States
Leaders of all nations, especially those entrusted with finding a lasting peace in the Middle East
Our military forces (especially Tod Allen, Alex Berry, Griffin Burns, Tom Chapman, Mark Garner, Joseph Liefer, Steve Madritch, Dan Ragone, Doug Ragone, Eric Stunkard, Greg Troehler, and Karl Wick)

For people around the world in need...

Victims and families of those involved in terrorists attacks
Our neighbors who aren't sure where their next meal will come from

For our homebound members...

Louise Bonke (615 Spring Forest Rd, Room 213, Raleigh 27609)
Erika Reter (6301 Cape Charles Dr., Raleigh 27617)
Roz Sekadlo (700 Red Forest Trail, Raleigh, NC 27615)
Paula Stresemann (Long Leaf Neuro-Medical Treatment Ctr., Wilson, NC)

For illness, surgeries or injuries... (Members)

Jennifer Andrews	Jacqueline Johnson	Dick McCarty	Dottie Tonnesen
Ethel Biddle	David Keithly	Valerie Mulvaney	Sarah Wilson
Karen Blair-Clay	Joanne Keithly	Vernon Peoples	Margaret Winter
Scott Bolin	Dolores Kling	Margarette Peoples	Pong Zumhagen
Jean Gerald	Hollie Kohl	George Richards	Ron Zechman
Clarence Haldy	Craig Landwehr	Barbara Rodberg	
Bob Hanson	Nickey Lovick	Dottie Scott	

For illness, surgeries or injuries... (Family/Friends of Members)

Gerri Boatlick	Pat Brown's cousin
The Chitinis Family	Suzanne Hagen's friends
Tim & Kaye Green	Gordy & Peggy Koehler's neighbors and friends
Jean Gresham & Chad	Eulaline Ramsahoye's friend and friend's grandson
Charles Kistler	Barbara Oates' father
Chris Koehler	Gordy & Peggy Koehler's son
Howard Lebsock	Vic Lebsock's brother
Adele Luther	Carolyn Loncosky's friend
Virginia Moxley	Nancy Thompson's mother
Markku Parviainen	Elina Cabrera's father
Kay Phillips	Bonnie Pierce's aunt
Jack Scott	Hill Scott's father
Mary Lou Sielschott	Suzanne Hagen's aunt
Tom Torbet	Suzanne Hagen's brother
Kevin Winstead	Joan Lockhart's cousin

For families of...

Dominick Freni	Dorothy Connors' stepson's uncle
Joan McGaffin	Bob McGaffin's wife and Lynn Hess' mother
Kermit Pederson	Sid Pederson's brother
Blaine Pinkston	Rosie Miller's uncle
Addie Wallace	Dan Sears' aunt
Jack Westphal	Betty Olsen's brother

GRACE LUTHERAN
CHURCH
5010 SIX FORKS ROAD
RALEIGH, NC 27609

DATED MATERIAL



July 2009

Join Supper Club

- * Do you enjoy eating great food?
- * Do you enjoy fellowship with the people of Grace?
- * Would you enjoy getting to know people over four delicious meals in a casual atmosphere?
- * Are you willing to host one of the meals?

Join us for Supper Club and enjoy four meals with members of Grace. What a wonderful opportunity to get to know people while enjoying a delightful social event complete with delicious food!

How does it work? You host one meal with six guests where you provide the main course and beverages. You visit three other homes for a meal where you provide either two vegetables, dessert, or bread and salad.

This year's Supper Club events include a kick-off pot luck, a holiday potluck, and four rotations: October/November, January/February, March/April, May/June.

We hope that you will join us! To participate call Peggy Koehler at 231-9563 or Ann Thompson at 848-7799 or email annthompson51@yahoo.com

