

Grace Notes

March 2020



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



Sharing the story

by Pastor Dave Lyle

We are shaped by telling the story of Jesus — and changed by our encounter with those who listen.

I recently did something I should have done a long time ago. I grabbed my well-worn copy of “The Hobbit,” invited my three children to sit on the couch with me, and started to read. They were instantly enraptured by J.R.R. Tolkien’s whimsical prose. They willingly walked with me into this old, fantastical world that was brand new to them. In sharing with them this story that means so much to me, I experienced the story in new ways. Not only was I remembering details I had forgotten, but through the observations and questions of my children, the story became new for me. In sharing a story with others, we experience the story in new, powerful ways for ourselves.

Sharing the story is central to our lives as Christians. I think, however, that we sometimes make the mistake of separating the

“sharing” from the “story.” We do so when we falsely disconnect fellowship from evangelism. We think of fellowship as the gathering together of like-minded people, people who already know the story. We view evangelism as the speaking of the gospel as a tool for converting those who don’t yet know the story. There is truth in all of this, but perhaps we miss a larger point and fall into the trap of thinking that “evangelism” is the way in which we make people who are different than us into people who are like us so that together we can share “fellowship.”

Reading a beloved story to my children on the couch was a moment that rightly encapsulates both evangelism and fellowship. I told a story I love to people I love, neither demanding nor expecting anything in return. In so doing,

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Evangelism meets fellowship as we share the story of Jesus

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community came into being. Not only were they changed by hearing the story, I was changed through telling it, and my understanding of the story was changed by the presence of those who were hearing it for the first time.

What if we lived Jesus' gospel in this way? What if we simultaneously gave up our apparent allergy to telling the gospel story that means so much to us and became truly open to having our understanding of that story shaped by the people we encounter?

In "Wide Welcome: How the Unsettling Presence of Newcomers Can Save the Church," Jessica Krey Duckworth writes:

Congregations practice hope by daily dying and rising with the continuity and displacement, reproduction and transformation that inherently take place in incarnate, human organizations. In the honest confession of [the] entropy [of death], hope becomes tangible in those newcomers who will come and "be-come" members of the congregation. In questioning the promise, newcomers are the presence of the world within the congregation. Simultaneously, newcomers are the future of the congregation and thus announce with their presence the promise of new life given to the church. The congregational imagination of who the church might become is shaped through its encounters with newcomers in the present.

The Board of Spiritual Life is working to revitalize our evangelism and fellowship ministries. This work is not

Share the story of Jesus with someone you love. It's still the best story around, and the telling of it never gets old.

about increased church growth or more potluck dinners, though I am opposed to neither of these things. No, the work we are engaging is about helping the people of Grace fall in love with telling the story of Jesus while being truly open to how the people who hear this story can reshape the fellowship we share. I am excited for this work. If you're interested in being part of this

journey, please contact Ed Mason, the chair of the Board of Spiritual Life (edwin.d.mason@gmail.com), or me. In the meantime, I hope you'll share the story of Jesus with someone you love. It's still the best story around, and the telling of it never gets old.



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. This issue was mailed via U.S. Postal Service Bulk Mail on Friday, February 28, with the hope that it will arrive in your mailbox no later than March 6. Copies are also available at Grace.

Deadlines and submissions. The April 2020 issue of Grace Notes will be mailed on Friday, March 27. The deadline for copy is Wednesday, March 18; the issue covers events through the first week of May. Send news to ggotsch@graceriverforest.org. Please limit 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.

Call Committee goes to work

Congregation President Jade Augustine has appointed an Associate Pastor Call Committee which will begin meeting soon. The committee will be chaired by Linda Street, with members Laura Clauss, Colin Krueger, Drew Niermann, Val Stefanic, Al Swanson, Tom Williams, and Julia Wood. They welcome suggestions and contact information for potential candidates. You can email the committee at CallCommittee@graceriverforest.org.

Why you should come to Bach's St. Matthew Passion at Grace

How long is the St. Matthew Passion? It's a fair, and common, question. The music alone takes about three hours to perform. Add a 20-minute intermission and the performances at Grace will last close to three and a half hours.

But I promise, they won't seem that long.

The St. Matthew Passion is Bach's greatest vocal work. It is monumental in scale as it tells the story of Jesus' suffering and death, from the woman at Bethany anointing his body (Matthew 26:6-7) through his final hours on the cross and the posting of soldiers to guard his tomb (Matthew 27: 66). It is a dramatic work, as soloists and choirs bring the words of Matthew's gospel to life, with shouting, mocking crowds, a forlorn, despondent Peter, and a special musical "halo" around the words of Jesus.

The Passion is also intimate, reflective, emotional music. Poetic arias for soloists, accompanied by beautiful melodies for violin, flute, or oboe, are also part of the Passion; the music expresses empathy with characters in the story and voices the heartfelt grief of believers. The choir sings Bach's exquisitely harmonized settings of Passion hymns, including multiple stanzas of the poignant "O Sacred Head Now Wounded." These hymns were dear to the hearts of Bach's eighteenth century Lutheran congregation in Leipzig, Germany. Twenty-first century worshippers at Grace will recognize them, too.

Bach is a master storyteller in this Passion, building tension in the narrative, and knowing when to step back and change the pace with new melodies, new meters, and almost infinite invention.

In the concert world, commentators describe the St. Matthew Passion as an oratorio, a sacred story told in music. But performed in a church, as Bach originally presented it on Good Friday in 1727 and again in 1729, it is a devotional experience, a meditation on God's suffering love for the world and its people, and on the love this inspires in human hearts.

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
ST. MATTHEW
PASSION

MARCH 28, 2020 6 P.M. + MARCH 29, 2020 4 P.M.

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

Michael D. Costello, director	Karen Brunssen, mezzo soprano
Hoss Brock, tenor (Evangelist)	Sarah Ponder, mezzo-soprano
Keven Keys, baritone (Jesus)	Ryan Townsend Strand, tenor
Maura Janton Cock, soprano	Douglas Anderson, baritone

Free admission ■ \$25 Suggested Donation ■ Childcare available

Reception during intermission sponsored by Women@Grace.

If you're planning on attending one of the Bach Cantata Vespers performances of the St. Matthew Passion at Grace — and you really should come! — I hope you will come prepared to stay for a while, to listen patiently, like Mary at Jesus' feet, and just let it all soak in. You'll be awed and charmed and moved by the music. And you'll leave feeling comforted and lifted up by the story of Jesus' overwhelming love for us.

Gwen Gotsch

More music at Grace ...

The Singing Men of Ohio

The Ohio University Glee Club
Sunday, March 8, 7:30 p.m.
Free. Donations welcome.

Oak Park Concert Chorale

A Tribute to Paul Bouman
Sunday, April 5, 2020, 4:00 p.m.
Tickets at oakparkconcertchorale.org,
or at the door.

Kronos Quartet

The Seven Last Words of Christ
Joseph Haydn
Monday, April 6, 7:30 p.m.
Free-will offering

What Wondrous Love Is This

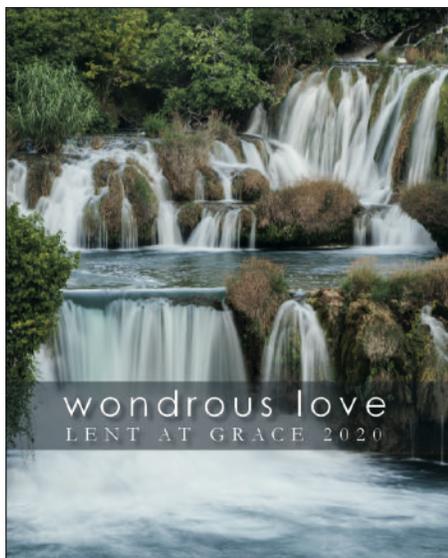
What wondrous love is this,
O my soul, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this
that caused the Lord of bliss
to bear the dreadful curse
for my soul, for my soul,
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul?

When I was sinking down,
sinking down, sinking down,
when I was sinking down, sinking down,
when I was sinking down
beneath God's righteous frown,
Christ laid aside his crown
for my soul, for my soul,
Christ laid aside his crown for my soul.

To God and to the Lamb
to God and to the Lamb I will sing;
to God and to the Lamb,
who is the great I AM,
while millions join the theme,
I will sing, I will sing,
while millions join the theme, I will sing.

And when from death I'm free,
I'll sing on, I'll sing on;
and when from death I'm free, I'll sing on;
and when from death I'm free,
I'll sing God's love for me,
and through eternity
I'll sing on, I'll sing on;
and through eternity I'll sing on.

North American folk hymn, 19th cent., alt.



SUNDAY WORSHIP

Sunday, March 1, 8:30 and 11 a.m.

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

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

Sunday, March 8, 8:30 and 11 a.m.

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT;

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

Sunday, March 15, 8:30 and 11 a.m.

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

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

Sunday, March 22, 8:30 and 11 a.m.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

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

Sunday, March 29, 8:30 and 11 a.m.

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Ezekiel 37:1-14, Psalm 130, Romans 8:6-11, John 11:1-45

WEDNESDAY WORSHIP IN LENT

“WONDROUS LOVE”

MORNING PRAYER 11:30 a.m.

Lunch is served on March 11 and 25

EVENING PRAYER 7 p.m.

Supper is served in Fellowship Hall at 6 p.m.

March 4 Homilist: Pastor Karl Reko

Choir: Grace School Tuneful Wednesdays

March 11 Homilist: Pastor Phyllis N. Kersten

Choir: Joyful Voices

March 18 Homilist: Deaconess Louise Williams

Choir: Grace School 5-8 Choir

March 25 Homilist: Pastor Robert Shaner

Choir: Soloist

April 1 Homilist: Pastor David Kluge

Choir: Grace School 3-4 Choir



ADULT EDUCATION

Adult Education classes meet at 9:45 a.m. on Sunday mornings in the lower-level Seminar Room. Classes are led by Grace members and guest speakers. If you have suggestions for Adult Ed programming, please contact Ted Anton of the Adult Education Committee (tanton@depaul.edu).

March 1

Mindfulness and Prayer

Steve Wendel, Applied Behavioral Scientist

Grace member Steve Wendel will share lessons from behavioral science that might help us better live out our faith in our daily lives. He'll draw upon his recently published book, "Spiritual Design," and discuss both the research and practical techniques.

March 8, 15 and 22

The Anatomy of Worship

Carl Schalk, composer, hymnologist, Professor Emeritus, Concordia University

March 8, Rites and Ceremonies

Christian worship is not just for Sunday anymore! A look at a baker's dozen of the Church's rites and ceremonies which nurture and strengthen the faith, which help us remember who and whose we are as we travel the road between Holy Baptism and Christian burial.

March 15, The Church and Time

How the Church celebrates time. A deep dive into the Church's year: The three great cycles of the Church's year, and the importance of the Lesser Festivals, saints days, and commemorations, with a discussion of conflicts between the Church's year and the secular culture.

March 22, The Holy Communion

A whirlwind trip through the central act of the Christian community, the weekly celebration of Holy Communion. How did it get its shape? What are its parts? How do they fit together? What is its ultimate purpose?

Sunday Bible Study

Led by Bob Jandeska, the Bible study group meets on Sunday mornings at 9:45 in the Conference Room on the lower level.

Lent and Easter books in the church library

Look for these and other inspirational books in the atrium display case and the church library this month, during our annual Lenten journey toward Easter.

The library is staffed on Sunday mornings and is open for self-service during the week. All are welcome to check out books, including from the glass case in the atrium. Ask for assistance from the person at the reception desk.

Making Sense of the Cross, by David J. Lose. Augsburg Fortress, 2011. [232 LOS]

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

Meditations on the Cross, by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, ed. Manfred Weber. Westminster Knox Press, 1996. [232.96 BON]

A Violent Grace: Meeting Christ at the Cross, by Michael Card. IVP Books, 2000. [232.96 CAR]

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

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

St Matthew Passion. Bach Cantata Vespers Orchestra and Chorus. Grace Lutheran Church, 2013. [CD 781.81 BAC]

Not for children only (Lent to Easter)

The Journey to Easter, by Carolyn Bergt. Illustrated. Concordia, 2004. [E 232.9 BER]

He is Alive! A Picture Book of the Last Week of Jesus' Life and His Resurrection, by Helen Haidle. Illustrated. Zonderkidz, 2001. [E 232.96 HAI]

Peter's First Easter, by Walter Wangerin, Jr. Illustrated. Zonderkidz, 2000. [J 232.96 WA]

Reflections on vocation: faith, hope, doubt, endurance

Grace's Church Vocations Initiative Scholarship Program is committed to raising up a new generation of leaders for the mission and ministry of the church. Eligible applicants must be pursuing a degree program in areas that are preparatory for Christian vocation within the church or in the secular world. Here are reports from our current scholarship recipients, with their reflections on faith and vocation.

Hannah Bernard, Jane Addams College of Social Work, University of Illinois at Chicago

As I begin my final semester of my Master of Social Work program at UIC, I have been reflecting on my experiences and lessons over the last year and a half. I have learned so much through my internships and classes and have often felt that I am exactly where I need to be, doing what I was meant to do. I have had just as many moments when I've felt full of doubt about my efficacy and our world's capacity for change. Reminding myself to have hope in others and God has helped me stay focused on my path in social work.

This year at my internship with a legal aid organization, I have primarily been working to support individuals whose housing is being threatened by eviction. I have seen how trauma, physical ability, and mental illness can jeopardize people's ability to maintain stable housing. One of the hardest parts about working with clients in these situations of crisis is the lack of empathy public housing administrations and legal systems often have for them. Sometimes it is equally hard to witness my organization turn away clients because of organizational capacity. I have experienced doubt in these moments, about the state of our country and my own ability to support people in working against unsympathetic systems. I wonder what, if any, the real impact of my support is for people.

I have experienced similar moments of doubt within my faith journey. There are times when I doubt the strength of God given the disheartening realities I see in my work and in the news. Sometimes it is hard to reconcile the inequalities and cruelty in the world with the unconditional love of God. I remember very clearly having doubts about God during my time at Grace Lutheran School and Church. I remember being told that doubt is a part of faith, that internal questioning is a sign of understanding and growth. I learned that doubt is normal and routine and does not negate the presence of hope.

Psalm 42:11 states "Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God" (NIV). In the moments when I feel hopeless about the pain and uncertainty our world faces or about my own ability to create change, I try to find examples of hope. Sometimes people win the battle against an eviction and preserve their affordable housing. Sometimes communities band together to support and protect each other. Sometimes our God makes his love known on this earth through us. The doubt I feel in so many different ways is a tool that I can use to learn and strengthen my beliefs, which is much easier to do when I can recognize moments of hope.

Baby Care Kits for Lutheran World Relief

Women @ Grace, the Knitting Ministry, Moms of Littles, and Children, Youth and Family Ministry are working together to provide Baby Care Kits for distribution by Lutheran World Relief. The kits provide families with basic items needed to care for a new baby and introduce their child to the world with pride. Please donate specific items from the list, or make a donation at the table in the atrium on Sundays during Lent.



Please bring your donations to the bin in the atrium by April 19.

- Lightweight simple cotton t-shirts (no Onesies ®)
- Long- or short-sleeved gowns or sleepers (without feet)
- Rompers or top/pants sets
- Receiving blankets, between 36" and 52" square
- Jacket, sweater or sweatshirt or fleece with a hood, or include a baby cap
- Hand made blankets, sweaters and hats are welcome.
- Pairs of socks

Guidelines

- Donate clothing in sizes 6–24 months.
- Gently used, clean clothing and blankets (no stains or tears) may be substituted for new.
- Please do not donate items with religious symbols, messages, or church names or items decorated with a U.S. flag, patriotic or military symbols, or references to the armed forces, including camouflage.

Reflections on vocation: Surrounded by witnesses

**Kurt Grahnke, Stritch School of Medicine
Loyola University Chicago**

I am deeply thankful for the continued support of the Grace community and the vocations scholarship. As I participate in the confirmation program as a mentor this year, I reflect on the mentors in my life, and I realize many of them are from Grace. In fact, my own confirmation mentor is still my role model as a physician at Loyola whose Christian faith underlies his practice. He and others serve as an example of how being a physician can truly be a vocation — a calling to help God’s people. It is remarkable that Grace fosters these kinds of life-long relationships in the forms of mentors, friends, and support networks. With Christ as a cornerstone of these relationships, the Grace community is home to me and is a big reason why I decided to go into medicine. Hebrews 12:1, my confirmation verse from 2007, is pertinent:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

Indeed, the journey of medical school requires endurance. It is a long and arduous process. Burnout and depression afflict medical students significantly more than their age-matched

peers. We face enormous stress and debt as we work nearly all of our waking hours to understand the mechanisms of human disease. Truthfully, it is a rather challenging time, but the sacrifice is worth it. I am all too aware that illness can break the hearts of entire families and communities. Yet medicine also has the power to bring good, life-changing news during some of the most difficult periods of people’s lives. Therefore, it is critical for me to do my absolute best in medical school. I am able to “run with endurance the race set before me” because of God and the people that God has put into my life, on earth and in heaven. Loved ones who have passed away and those who are currently battling against illness inspire me. All the while, amidst the joy and the pain intrinsic to medicine, God assures me of my purpose. As I look toward the future, I hope to be a physician who is involved in making healthcare more equitable by helping the underserved. There are currently vast, unjust health disparities between wealthy and poor communities across the country, but these health gaps are quite prominent within the immediate Chicagoland area. Life expectancies can differ as much as 15 years between neighborhoods like River Forest and North Lawndale. With this context, I will always view being a physician as a vocation and apply the concept of Christ’s love to dedicating my time on earth to helping those who need it most.



Makayla Dahleen, our part-time Youth Ministry Associate, will be working with Grace’s teens through the summer. She has been leading Teen Talk discussions during the Education Hour on Sundays in the Youth Room. (Look carefully — Makayla’s right in the middle of the photo.)

Make small changes to improve your eating habits during National Nutrition Month

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics sponsors National Nutrition Month each March. This year the slogan is “Eat right, bite by bite.” Good nutrition doesn’t have to be restrictive or overwhelming. Small goals and changes can have a cumulative healthful effect, and every little bit (or bite!) of nutrition is a step in the right direction. Here are some ideas for healthier eating, adapted from a bulletin insert published by Advocate Health Care’s Faith and Health Partnerships.

Hidden ingredients to watch for in prepared foods

“Being able to grab and go with prepared meals, like frozen lunches and packaged snacks can be very easy,” says Kayla Hansmann, dietitian at Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center in Chicago. “Convenience is great, but what’s the long-term cost to your family’s health? A few extra minutes spent preparing fresh foods now can be less costly than the risks to your family’s future health.”

Hansmann says it’s especially easy to overlook possibly harmful ingredients in prepared foods, if you’re not reading the nutrition labels fully. She says there are four hidden ingredients you should look out for:

1. Partially hydrogenated oils. These oils may also be labeled as trans fats on the nutrition label, but the amount listed may be tricky because any amount of trans fat less than 0.5 grams can be reported as 0, so you may end up getting trans fats even if the label says the food contains 0. Hansmann suggests looking at the ingredient list and avoiding any hidden trans fats listed as “partially hydrogenated oils.”

2. MSG and sodium. Packaged foods often contain a great deal of sodium, as reported not only on the nutrition label, but also in the ingredients list as MSG. Ethnic dishes can be particular sources of MSG, which is often used as a flavor enhancer. Other foods that may contain hidden sodium are lunch meats, cheeses, frozen pizzas, and even fresh baked breads.

3. Sodium nitrates/nitrites. This hidden ingredient is often included as a food preservative, helping extend the life of a packaged food item. However, Hansmann says there is growing evidence that this preservative is linked to certain types of cancer.

4. High fructose corn syrup. This ingredient is simply a fancy name for sugar and may be contributing to the growing diabetes epidemic in the U.S. Watch ingredient labels for ingredients ending in “-ose,” which are different forms of sugar. Look closely—there can often be three to four such ingredients in one food item.

Hansmann says, “Many chronic diseases are preventable with a proper diet. You just need to build in a little extra preparation

time and make certain your family is getting a properly balanced diet. Making meal preparation fun by including family members can make it seem less of a chore and teach good nutrition, at the same time.”

Eating Meals as a Family: Fun and Good For You!

Sitting down for family meals seems harder to do these days when everyone is running in different directions. But a recent study published in the Journal of Pediatrics found young adults who ate just one or two family meals a week as kids were 45 percent less likely to be overweight as compared to those who had never eaten with their families.

Some of the thinking behind this is that when we eat as a family we eat more slowly and intentionally. Parents may be more careful about the kinds of foods they serve. Portion sizes or how much we actually consume tends to be less.

But eating together can also promote connection and a sense of love and belonging which helps reduce the impact of stress on the body. We know that stress can stimulate the production of hormones that can affect our metabolism, or our ability to burn fat. Caring, supportive interaction with other people is one of the most powerful ways to help our bodies release stress.

Eating as a family is fun and doesn’t take as much time as you might think. Give it a try! Here are some ideas:

- Set aside one day of the week for eating a family meal. It might be the same day every week, or different days based on the family schedule.
- Create a pack of cards with conversation topics to discuss over a meal.
- Encourage older children and teens to play menus and cook at home one night a week.
- Look online for recipes that are quick and healthy and have them close at hand when shopping or planning meals.

Prayer. Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, king of the world, who brings forth bread from the earth. (Ancient Jewish blessing)

Health Cabinet table in the atrium, March 15

Pat Gulik, Grace’s Parish Nurse, will have more information about nutrition at the Health Cabinet table in the atrium between services on Sunday, March 15. You can also have your blood pressure checked and pick up a prayer square or prayer shawl for yourself or a friend.



Justice and Peace Committee going deeper on immigration issues

During February Grace's Justice and Peace team collaborated with leaders of the Mission Committee of Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church in Oak Park to offer two public presentations about current immigration realities and concrete ways for people of faith to engage. In the weeks ahead, the Justice and Peace team is offering opportunities to go deeper into these issues: deeper in understanding, deeper in compassion, deeper in costly love, deeper in the way of the cross.

The public programs took place on February 2 and 16, as some 60 to 70 persons from our two congregations and a number of other faith communities, went deeper, hearing the firsthand testimony of Rev. Ben Lynch, co-pastor of Fair Oaks, and learning about the AMMPARO ministry strategy from program director Ms. Mary Campbell. Ben Lynch brought compelling images, powerful stories, a tender heart and persistent discomfort grounded in the gospel to his presentation about the situation at the southern border, specifically in the sister locales of Matamoros, Mexico, and Brownsville, Texas. Mary Campbell brought substantive, wide-angle perspective on the trans-national dynamics and unique challenges of the displacement of peoples across this hemisphere, along with heartening descriptions of the ministry programs which the ELCA (and others) have developed to provide specific ways in which to respond.

One of those responses is the Guardian Angels ministry, which provides training and support for individuals who are willing to come alongside migrant minors — school-age children or single parent families — to offer spiritual care and physical presence

when those persons are facing procedural actions in formal immigration proceedings in the U.S. (For more information on the Guardian Angels role, go to elca.org and type "Guardian Angels" into the search box.) A total of 19 people at the sessions indicated active interest in participating in the Guardian Angels program, and the Justice and Peace team is now seeking to schedule a local training for this first wave, with an eye toward inviting others and providing additional training dates as needed. If you might be interested, feel free to contact Dick Martens (708-715-4400; richardmartens10@gmail.com) or Mary Paulson (708-267-2117; sherwinho@comcast.net) for more information.

Throughout this Lenten season, the entire congregation is invited to go deeper by making use of the specially designed devotional guide "Strangers in the Land," based on the book "Christians at the Border" by M. Daniel Carroll R., a professor of Hebrew scriptures at Wheaton College and an Adult Education presenter here at Grace in the past. These booklets are free and available in the atrium at the Justice and Peace team table on Sundays and at the reception desk during the week.

In order to go even deeper, the team is sponsoring simple luncheon meals (free will offering) and guided small group discussions after 11 a.m. worship services on three Sundays, March 8, March 22, and April 5 (Palm Sunday). These gatherings are open to all, and will be held in Grace's Fellowship Hall. Please sign up online at gracriverforest.org or at the reception desk so that the team can be sure there's food for all.

Successful Slovakia Dinner supports our ministry with the CCE

An enthusiastic crowd was on hand January 17 for Grace Church's fourth annual Slovakia Dinner benefiting the Center for Christian Education in Martin, Slovakia.

Guests enjoyed an authentic Slovak dinner, a cash bar, a silent auction, and a presentation by CCE co-founders Bohdan Hrobon and Adrian Kacian. The two leaders unveiled their plans for a community center that includes art and music studios, an outdoor classroom, a sport field, a gymnastics room and power gym, and renovation of the school playground.

To date, the 2020 Slovakia Dinner has raised more than \$45,000. Of that amount, donations to CCE's playground renovation project totaled \$12,000, exceeding CCE's budgeted goal.

Linda Bernard spearheaded the playground project at Grace Church, which was supported by Women @ Grace and the 2019 Oktoberfest Committee, which donated a portion of the proceeds from last fall's fest.

"After fourteen years of ministry with the CCE our partnership remains vibrant, a true blessing on both sides of the ocean. Bohdan and Adrian share a passion for the gospel and for education that is infectious. It is a blessing to call them friends



Adrian Kacian, Bohdan Hrobon, and Pastor Dave Lyle

and to welcome them back to Grace year after year," said Pastor Dave Lyle.

The 2020 Grace mission team is mobilizing for their summer trip to Martin, where they will once again teach Vacation Bible School. If you would like to know more about these mission trips to Martin, Slovakia, contact Julie Modrich (708-366-6900, ext 229; jmodrich@gracriverforest.org).

News from Grace School

Lutheran Schools Week celebration,

March 9–13. In the week leading up to Graceful Evening, March 9–13, students at Grace School celebrate Lutheran Schools Week. This year's theme is "Camp Mystery" with fun activities, themed dress-up days, an all-school photo, and special lunches and fun. Friday is Grandparents and Grand-Friends Day—a half-day of school with lots of special visitors.

All-school concert. At 10:30 a.m. on March 13, Grace students will present a special concert for Grandparents and Grand-Friends guests. All are welcome to attend — even if you don't have a "grand" at Grace School.

Basketball contenders. Grace School's 7-8 girls basketball team has been invited to the Lutheran Sports Association State Basketball Tournament, March 6–8. Follow their progress at luthsports.org. The 7-8 girls are coached by Kristi Underhill, who teaches physical education, math and science classes.

Employment at Grace School. The school is seeking a sixth grade teacher for the 2020-21 academic year. More information is available on the website at GraceRiverForest.org/School.

Crayon recycling. As of January 31, Grace School students had recycled 75 pounds of crayons! Boxes are headed to the Crayon Initiative where they will be sorted, melted, and turned into new crayons for children's hospitals.

Enrollment and re-enrollment for 2020-21. Grace School is accepting applications for the 2020-21 school year, and current families are completing the re-enrollment process for next year. If you know parents interested in a Grace School education for their students, please encourage them to check out the school website and Facebook page and to come for a visit. First Look Fridays, 8:30–10:30 a.m. on March 20, April 17, and May 15 offer an opportunity to see Grace students and teachers in action!

Grace School offers a full-day kindergarten program for five-year-olds, and an optional afternoon programs for three- and four-year-olds. For more information call the school office at 708-366-6900.



Support the Graceful Evening auctions. Ticket sales for Graceful Evening have closed, but you can still donate to the Fund-A-Need Auction online. And you can participate in the Silent Auction even if you are not attending the event. Register at graceful2020.givesmart.com. Bidding opens at noon on Friday, March 13, and closes at 9 p.m. on Saturday, March 14.



Grace School second and third graders celebrated the Chinese New Year by creating this colorful dragon and parading it through the school. Each plate on the dragon has a Chinese character representing a student's first name. Stop by the second-floor hallway and see the intricate detail that went into this creation!

First Look Fridays at Grace School

8:30–10:30 am
March 20, April 17, May 15

Drop by for a tour of our Early Childhood and Elementary classrooms.



Climb aboard for mountains of fun at Rocky Railway!
On this faith-filled adventure, kids discover that trusting Jesus pulls them through life's ups and downs.

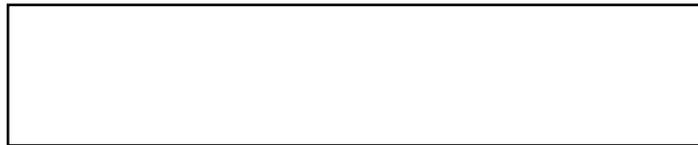
Ages 3 through current 4th graders

Optional extended day available until 5 p.m.

June 15-19, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Register now for VBS 2020

Get ready for a week of summer fun!



7300 Division St.
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