

Voice of Grace

We are called to proclaim the Word and celebrate the sacraments. We gather in Christian community for nurture and support. We are sent out in service to others.

A Monthly Newsletter

June/July 2015

Good Things Come Through Prayer



The congregation was saddened to hear that Miriam Gaenicke, daughter of David and Linda Gaenicke, was in the hospital recovering from a neurological injury. The photo, above, was taken to demonstrate the prayers that are being sent on her behalf. Linda has since written that "Miriam was thrilled with the huge photo...thanks, dear members of Grace."

Linda continued, "We ask that you continue to pray for Miriam and her healing process. This can take 6-12 more months. She has a long journey to complete; however, we know that prayer has kept her going. She is determined to regain as much as she can, and we feel that she will be successful."

Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.



Adult Forum & Sunday School 9:15 a.m.

Worship Outside the Box

submitted by Nina Daly

I have always been a little nervous when I visit a church other than my own. I wonder if I will feel welcome. Will I be able to take communion? If so, I watch to make sure I follow the communion instructions correctly. What will I wear? Somehow it is important that I fit in and do not stick out as a visitor.

Recently I was a visitor at a church that had services on Saturday. I visited Living Stone Chapel at the men's prison in Shelton. Before I left home, I knew that I could not wear anything khaki in color. I entered the chapel with all of my usual concerns multiplied by the fact that I was a woman in a men's prison.

As I entered, I felt welcomed right away. The prisoners led the service and had their own worship band. As I heard the band rehearse; the songs were familiar and reminded me of when I used to be in a worship band. We joined the musicians in prayer before the service started.

We were greeted individually by the men. They introduced themselves by name, welcomed us warmly, and made eye contact. I talked with a man who told me that he wanted to give his talents to God, but he had difficulty reading. He found that he was able to participate by setting out the Bibles before the service. He also proudly told me that he was inspired to save pieces of cardboard from tea boxes and give them to people for markers.

I looked through the Bible on my seat and enjoyed looking at the passages that were marked in it. Many passages matched the verses I had marked in my Bible at home.

As the band started playing, I joined in the singing and realized God was definitely in this place!

"So take me as You find me
All my fears and failures
Fill my life again
I give my life to follow
Everything I believe in
Now I surrender"

We are all prisoners in one way or another, whether it is something we have done that keeps us from Him or anxieties that push us away. I encourage all of you to worship outside the box (e.g., visiting the prisons, going to nursing homes, or visiting shut ins). You will definitely receive blessings! Oh, and by the way, communion was served by the men. We received communion wafers and had grape juice in disposable cups!

World Tour: *Voice of Grace*



Lynn and Joan Bender wrote to the *Voice of Grace* and submitted a photo of their travels as part of our "World Tour" project.

Lynn and Joan write: "This is the Calvary Church in Charlotte, NC. Should we return with a copy of the architecture plans? Think big! We could hold the entire population of Port Townsend."

When you travel, include a copy of *Voice of Grace* in a photo of you enjoying your experience. Submit it to the newsletter editor, and it will be published in the next newsletter. This helps share the activities of our members and also demonstrates how far around the world our *Voice of Grace* is seen and read.

Many Hands



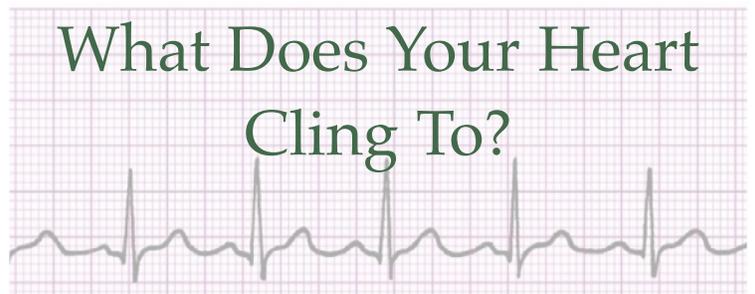
Grace members (and others) prepare to spread landscaping material at local Habitat homes. The material was purchased using Thrivent action team funds obtained through Grace/Thrivent members.



Leona Brown

the congregation raised their voices in the strains of "Happy Birthday" to our dear friend – Leona Brown.

Happy 100th birthday to Leona Brown! Leona's birthday is June 3 and was celebrated by the entire congregation on May 31 in the church fellowship hall. Cake was served and the



If you are very quiet, it is said, you can hear your own heartbeat. Perhaps by God's grace, during a quiet moment you have realized that your heart is beating in the same rhythm as God's own heart. You have been drawn close and rest securely in God's great love for you.

For just that moment, you are aware that you really do love God with your whole heart and trust God with your whole being. For you in that moment, there are no other gods.

But there may be other times when you slow down and become quiet only to realize that your heart is out of sync with God's. Instead of coming closer to God, your heart is pulled in other directions. Someone or something else entices you to another rhythm, and when your heart embraces it, you have taken on another god.

"That to which your heart clings," Martin Luther wrote, "is really your god." Does this interpretation of the first commandment hit close to home?

To live our baptismal life is to learn to name those other gods, to confess our idolatry, to know we are forgiven, and to begin anew in God's grace.

Today we remember Philip and James, apostles. The May 2015 issue of Gather magazine includes an article by Mark Allan Powell about Philip and James. This message was adapted from "What Your Heart Clings To," written by E. Louise Williams. This first appeared in the January/February 2008 issue of Lutheran Woman Today (now Gather) magazine.

Worship Time Change

Summer services will change to 9:30 a.m. beginning on Sunday, July 5, and continuing through Sunday, September 6. During this period, there will be no Adult Forum. Services will return to 10:30 a.m. on Rally Day, September 13.

Mark Your Calendars

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Saturday, June 13 | Prayer Retreat, 9:00 a.m. to Noon |
| Wednesday, June 17 | Taize Worship Service, 7:00 p.m. |
| Sunday, June 28 | Congregational Meeting after worship |
| Sunday, July 5 | Life Care Worship, 2:00 p.m. |
| Wednesday, July 15 | Taize Worship Service, 7:00 p.m. |
| Wednesday, August 5 | Grace goes to the Baseball Game |
| Wednesday, August 19 | Taize Worship Service, 7:00 p.m. |
| Saturday, August 22 | Prayer Retreat, 9:00 p.m. to Noon |
| Sunday, September 13 | Rally Day |

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01-19-2015

OH MAN I THINK I LEFT THE IRON PLUGGED IN

Thank You, Choir!



We have enjoyed a marvelous season with the Grace Lutheran Choir directed by Colleen Johnson. Now, during the summer it is time for their break. Special thanks go out to each choir member for bringing joy to our hearts: Alex Brown, Nina Daly, Sharon Dembro, Ayla Favati, David Gaenicke, Bob Haines, Gail Helgeson, Claus Janssen, Jim Little, Sue Peterson, Joel Peterson, Marty Richards, Lanny Turay and Linda Wolff. Special thanks to Lisa Lanza who provides such beautiful accompaniment. To celebrate the end of the season, the choir hosted a Choir Appreciation Sunday on May 31.



Pastor's Message: *"How Blessed I Am!"*

On June 22, I will celebrate the fifth anniversary of my ordination and my fifth year here with all of you at Grace Lutheran. Haven't the years just flown by! Five years ago, on that first Sunday at Grace, I was nervous and excited as I stood up to preach. I had been preparing for that day for six years. God had been preparing me for that day for my entire life. And I am still nervous and excited each Sunday when I stand up to preach. I hope that never changes. It is such an immense privilege and responsibility to proclaim God's Good News to you. Thank you, God!

Everywhere I go, I brag about what a wonderful congregation Grace is. You are welcoming, flexible, good-natured, patient, understanding and, most of all, you love God and love each other. I can't imagine a better congregation or a better call for me.

As I look back on the past five years there are many things that stand out for me. I think of our amazing capital projects and your generosity to fund a new roof among other things. I think of our huge donation to the Food Bank. I think of our wonderful parties – you are good party-people: Christmas parties, Easter brunches, Rally Days. I think of the wonderful fellowship at our Soup Suppers. I think of our amazing worship during Holy Week, the Easter Vigils and Christmas. I think of some of the challenging issues we have tackled and come through still holding on to each other and moving forward. I think of our prayer retreats and the closeness to Jesus that you have shared with each other. The Taize services have a special place in my heart. Our visits to the prisons and our worship at Life Care Center – these are times we have given of ourselves to make life a little better for some others. But the most memorable and moving thing of the past five years – has been you! Walking with each of you through the ups and downs of life. Weeping with you during painful or frightening times, mourning with you when you have lost a loved one, praying with you when you face challenges or struggles. It is being with you and you sharing your life with me that is the best part of being a pastor. It is hearing you tell of how you have seen Jesus in your life, how God has been there for you when you really needed Him. I have been privileged to visit you in the hospital, to pray with you and sometimes to simply sit with you. And the very best of all – has been each week as I look into your face, say your name, and place the precious body of Christ into your hand. Sometimes that feels like the most intimate act there is, sharing Christ with you. What a privilege to know you – to serve you – to love you.

But that is just looking back; we can also look forward. In my recent performance evaluation with the council's executive committee I talked about two goals, two things which I see as my primary emphasis:

1. **To preach, teach, and live out the Good News of God's love in Jesus Christ among you.**
2. **To equip the saints (that's you) for ministry in the world.**

This partly means helping you to live your life openly, in front of others, letting them see your struggles, your weaknesses, but also letting them see the amazing love that you know in Jesus Christ. And helping you to be prepared to have an answer when they ask about the hope that is in you (1 Pet. 3:15). And since you know the Good News of God's love in Jesus Christ in your life, I want to help you spread that love around as widely and deeply as possible.

We will see where God takes us over the next years. I don't know for sure what the future will hold, but I know that Christ will go with us, and in His presence, it will be good. I can think of no greater privilege than to be a pastor, and I can think of no greater joy than to be your pastor. I am truly blessed. I thank God for you.

*God Bless,
Pastor Coe*

Accessibility Task Force Update

An Accessibility Task Force made up of Michelle Haines, Marty Richards, Lois Sherwood, Corinne Bugbee-Smith, and Janet Hutchison has been formed to review the accessibility of our facilities. We want to make sure that everyone is welcome and can comfortably enter, exit and use our facilities. This group recently met with interested members of the congregation after church. Many ideas have come up in the discussion so far. The following is an incomplete list of what has been talked about. None of these are cast in concrete and some will probably never happen, but they are listed here so that you at least know some of the things that have been brought up.

Ideas that Have Been Suggested

Sanctuary Seating:

- Remove the two front pews on right side allowing more wheelchair space. Chairs could be put there and moved as needed.
- Remove all the pews and replace with chairs for more flexibility.
- Remove the small table by the piano and move the font to make another wheelchair space near the piano.

Sanctuary Traffic Patterns:

- Move the pulpit to the side to allow for better traffic flow during communion.
- Allow those using wheel chairs and walkers and those needing more time to leave church first at the end of worship. This might speed up the overall exiting.
- Allow people to exit after worship by pew starting with the front so that not everyone is pushing into the aisle at once.

Parking:

- Make all the paved parking spaces handicapped spaces with new signs. Encourage able-bodied individuals to park on the gravel or grass.
- Make a load/unload only space at the bottom of the ramp with signs.
- Move the hose off the sidewalk leading to the courtyard so that the courtyard ramp is more accessible to those with walkers and wheelchairs.
- Make more paved parking spaces.
- Widen the parking spaces
- Rebuild or remodel the front ramp to reduce the steep incline.
- Repaint the lines on the parking spots.

Bathrooms:

- Install a higher toilet in back accessible bathroom and possibly one of the front bathrooms
- Put grab bars in the wall in the back bathroom.
- Put horizontal rather than slanted grab bars in front bathrooms.
- Make some signs so people know there is another accessible bathroom in the back.



Fellowship Hall:

- Move the treats table or get a smaller table to improve traffic pattern (already being tried)
- Move the treat table out of the center and up against a wall to open up space.
- Leave clear path to back of room and toilets.
- Install sound baffling.
- Encourage everyone to move through the hallway to the Fellowship Hall and avoid backing up traffic in front of the bathrooms.

While these items are being studied, we would ask that all the parking spaces on the concrete pad in front of the church be reserved for handicapped parking. This would be a good temporary measure that we could all help with.

If you have input on any of these items, please feel free to contact a member of the committee.

2015 S.W. Washington Synod Assembly

by Marty Richards

The 2015 Southwestern Washington Synod Assembly was held in Vancouver WA on May 15 and 16. Along with Pastor Coe and Earl Kong, I had the opportunity to be a voting member in this inspiring and uplifting event. My head and heart are brimming with reflections and joy for the work that is being done in the national ELCA, our synod, and all the individual congregations within our area.

The overall theme for the meeting was "The Three Great Listeners." Our plenary presentations, worship experiences and workshops focused aspects of this idea. The image that especially resonated with me was the idea of the three tables around which we sit: The Kitchen table (Our family and friends) The Altar table (in communion in our congregation) and The Mission table (our community table with our neighbors). We need to be listening to stories and listening to where God is leading us personally, our congregation, and our community. It is around careful consideration at the mission table that we consider who our neighbor is and how we do missional outreach. There were many chances to share and reflect on this theme.

Interspersed within the meeting were video clips and heartfelt talks about the many mission ministries of the ELCA and of the Synod. These came from Nambia in Africa (where we have a sister synod relationship) to the Hilltop in Tacoma and Living Stones prison ministry in Shelton; from the international malaria campaign to Lutheran World Relief (both impact persons all over the world.) You will be hearing about some of these in the coming weeks here at Grace.

During the assembly we did the work of the SW Synod by voting on budgets, resolutions about fund raising feasibility, and persons to fill various roles within the synod. (Pastor Coe was elected to be the Olympic area member on the nominating committee for the Synod.) We honored pastors who had served for many years and had milestone anniversaries (including Pastor Julie Kanarr, a daughter of our congregation who celebrated 25 years in ministry.) And we heard our bishop Richard Jaech challenge us to consider who our neighbors are in community as a part of our Synod.

I want to thank the congregation for the opportunity to be a part of this, and I encourage anyone who likes to be challenged and uplifted in the faith to consider going in the future!

Pastor Coe, Earl Kong and I will be making a presentation on the things we learned in Vancouver at the Adult Forum on June 28. Meanwhile, if you want to know more, ask us! These are challenging times for faith communities. But there are also lights that brighten our pathway for the future. When we listen, really listen, we can hear the Spirit moving.

Take Me Out to the Ball Game!

The men of Grace Lutheran Church are organizing another special outing open to everyone. Come to the Tacoma Rainiers game on Wednesday, August 5, to see the Rainiers play the Reno Aces. This is the time to enjoy America's favorite sport



plus America's favorite food, the hot dog.

Jim Espenson, the men's group coordinator, has arranged for special pricing at only \$11.50 per person. That price includes reserved seating, a free hot dog and a cola. What a deal! The only stipulation is that we reserve a minimum of 20 seats. Plan to come, bring your family and friends, and enjoy baseball at its finest. Your early payment (to Jim Espenson) at this bargain price will be appreciated.

Men's Barbecue *Reserve the Date!*

The men's group barbecue is set for Saturday, August 29, at the Kala Point beach. Reservations have been set for the kitchen area, which is under cover in the event of an August drizzle. The barbecue is open to all Grace male members and friends. This would be a good opportunity to bring some of your male friends for an afternoon of good food and fellowship. See you at the grill!



Work Party Scrapbook



Left: Penny Westerfield repairs hymnals.



Right: Janet Hutchison shows her skills with the squeegee.



Left: Mr. Happy Face, Jim Little, explores the crawl space.



Right: Harlan Wolff touches up the paint on the entrance railing.



Left: Nina Daly, David and Linda Gaenicke pull weeds from the flower bed.



Right: The crew attacks weeds with a vengeance.



Left: Joel Peterson and Pastor Coe provide special attention to the front plantings.



Right: Alex Brown cleans and preps the courtyard benches.

Island On Fire: The Extraordinary Story Of A Forgotten Volcano That Changed The World

A Book Review by George Hanson

When I was living in Iceland during the 1961-62 academic year, my mother called me from our home in Chicago. I quickly discerned the concern in her voice as she asked me, "Are you OK? I heard that there has been a volcanic eruption in Iceland." I assured her that I was fine and that the eruption was far enough away that all I knew about it was what I read in the newspapers or heard on the evening news.

But communication was very different in 1783 when the volcano Laki erupted. News about this catastrophe was slow in reaching the outside world. Actually, the Laki eruption was a fissure eruption of over 100 craters. When the eruption was over, a year and a half later, so much lava was spewed from the earth that it could have covered all of Manhattan up to the 71st floor of the Empire State Building. The effects of this outburst were felt throughout northern Europe but nowhere more than in Iceland -- especially in the Skaftafelssýsla district.

This book is the story of an island focusing particularly on the account of the disastrous eruption of 1783.

Several famous volcanic eruptions are covered as well. Today, the Greek island of Santaroni, with its white buildings, gleams against a blue sky. Years ago, I hiked from the blue Aegean Sea to the top of this small island. I was overwhelmed by the beauty all around me;

however, it was very different around 1600 B.C., when Thera, as Santaroni was then known, blew its top. In 79 A.D., Vesuvius suddenly erupted, and the citizens of Pompei were frozen in time. We can still see their tormented figures.

But this book is mainly about Iceland and the Laki eruption. Here the people died slowly of starvation and disease as poisonous gases showered down upon the helpless population, destroying the sheep in the hills and the fish in the sea. We are unable to see tormented faces but we can imagine how deep the torment was as we look upon this vast field of lava. The effects of this "Island On Fire" spread far beyond Iceland. Clouds carried the toxic gases to northern Europe, where tens of thou-

sands died.

The hero of this book is The Rev. Jón Steingrímsson (1728–1791). He was born to an impoverished family, which became even poorer upon the death of his father when he was only eleven. There seemed little prospect that he could continue on to higher education. But he was able to attend the cathedral school at Hólar. He graduated at the top of his class, and in those days it was assumed he would continue his studies at the University of Copenhagen; however, providence had other plans. He did study with the National Physician of Iceland, and with this basic training, he treated about 2,000 patients. He eventually made his way to the south of Iceland, where he later became pastor of the Kirkjubæjarklaustur congregation when he was 55 years of age. It was a time of widespread prosperity. People had so many sheep that they could not count them all.

The rivers were filled with fish, and the ocean yielded its bounty.

But, then, the cloud. The first chapter of "Island On Fire" begins with the words, "Around 9 a.m. on Sunday, 8 June 1783, Reverend Jón Steingrímsson stepped out of his small farmhouse, mounted his horse and began the five kilometre journey to church. Sunday services were his favourite part of the week, but he was particularly looking forward to today's service. It was Pentacost Sunday...."

"Jon chanced to look northward over his shoulder, and abruptly his reverie dissolved. He pulled up his horse and gazed in wonder and alarm. Looming over the foothills was the enormous, roiling black cloud."

The time of testing had begun. The erupting volcanoes released tons of ash and poisonous gases, turning the land of the midnight sun into almost total darkness at midday. The mad flow of lava rushed down a 19-mile gorge, 60 metres wide and 280 metres deep, destroying everything in its path.

On 20 July 1783, Jon's congregation members made their way to church, groping in the darkness. Once inside the church, the pastor implored God to save his flock. Meanwhile, they



The Jon Steingrímsson Memorial Chapel.

could hear the fury of the lava just a few yards away. After the service, when the church door was opened, they saw that the lava had not advanced an inch further. From this time the service was known as the eldnessa (fire mass) and Jon as the eldprestur (fire priest).

Until the eruption ceased, in February 1784, few were killed by the lava. Instead, they were doomed to die slowly by disease and starvation. Sometimes Pastor Jon conducted funerals for as many as ten people in a single day (often buried in a single grave). Known as “famine of the mist,” this catastrophe took ten thousand lives, or one fourth of the population, including Pastor Jon’s beloved wife of 38 years, Thorunn.

As sulphur dioxide from the volcanoes descended to lower elevations and encountered moisture, it turned into sulphuric acid that tore into the lungs of people and livestock. Toward the end of the 18th century, the population was reduced to a mere 40,000. There was even thought of moving the entire population to Denmark. Thus ended one of the worst periods of Icelandic history.

Pastor Jon Steingrinnson was a man of faith and also a scientist. He held a traditional view as far as his faith was concerned. Somehow he had to reconcile his faith with a scientific outlook. His treatise on the Laki eruption, translated into English as *“Fires of the Earth”* in 1998, gives a detailed account of the event. In fact, he was the first volcanist in Icelandic history. His book remains the primary reference of this historic event. His autobiography, perhaps the greatest in the Icelandic language, was translated into English in 2002 by Dr. Michael Fell under the title, *“An Ever Present Help in Trouble.”*

While *“Island on Fire”* is primarily about the 1783 eruption, it is much more. It covers some of the great volcanic eruptions

in history. Between its 224 pages, it covers a lot of material over the ages.

Today I’m looking out at beautiful Mount Baker, an active volcano. It’s a cloudless day, but still I wonder....

Church Audit Completed

Grace Lutheran Church has just completed an audit conducted by Jennifer Turney of Port Townsend. More information about the audit will be shared during our congregational meeting on June 28. The overall findings noted in the report are as follows: “I found the bookkeeping to be correct and complete at this time. My only recommendation is that it is consolidated into Quickbooks for ease of accuracy and understanding your cash position. Thank you and keep up the great work! Jennifer Turney”

“Many invest wisely in business matters, but fail to invest time and interest in their most valued possessions: their spouses and children.”
— Billy Graham



Have You Shared
Your Faith
In Christ Today?

Large Group Worships At Women's Prison



For several years now, members of the Grace Lutheran congregation have made visits to the men's prison in Shelton to share in their worship service. Invariably they return to Port Townsend filled with stories of the significance of those shared experiences. For the first time this past month, a group from

Grace Lutheran drove to the women's prison in Purdy, WA, to participate in a worship service at that institution. Again, the participants were struck by the love and heart rending experiences they encountered. Sign-up for the next visitation. It could change your life.

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Secretary: Betty Oakes
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