

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.

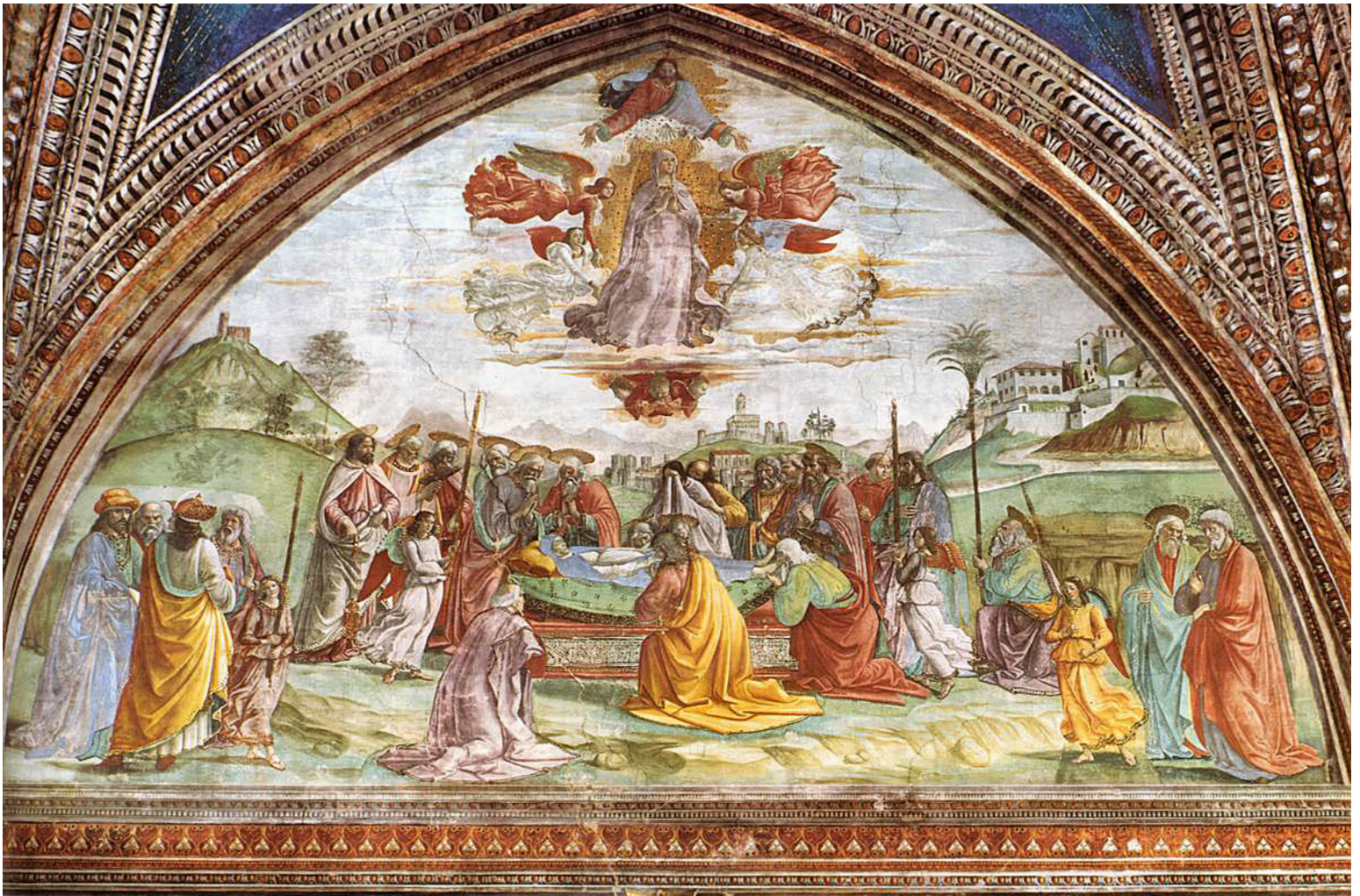
A Monthly Newsletter

August 2011

The Death and Assumption of the Virgin

by Domenico Ghirlandaio 1486-90, Santa Maria Novella, Florence

Compiled by Susan Reid



If you read through the list of Greater and Lesser Festivals that the ELCA celebrates, you will discover that August 15 is dedicated to Mary, Mother of Our Lord. Although many other

Greater and Lesser Festivals involve Mary (the Nativity, Epiphany, and the Presentation of Our Lord, for example),

“Death and Assumption” continues on page 2

Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.



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

"Death and Assumption" continued from cover
August 15 is reserved solely to honor her.

This month's painting is entitled "The Death and Assumption of the Virgin," a popular subject among pre and post-Reformation painters, both Catholic and Protestant. Like many painters, Ghirlandaio has presented two parts of the story in one scene. The lower portion of the canvas depicts the death of the virgin as she lies on her bier. The body of the aged virgin is surrounded by the apostles, identified by their halos, who weep, pray, and kiss her feet in a sign of reverence. Angels are holding torches, while one of the apostles holds a palm, a symbol of resurrection.

In the upper part of the painting the virgin is shown again, young and attractive, supported by angels. God is welcoming her. In the background are the hills, castles, and fortified towns that surrounded Florence. The final chapter of Mary's life is depicted on the chapel's central wall with the "Coronation of the Virgin," in which Mary is crowned Queen of Heaven.

As Protestants, how are we to look at this painting? In Ghirlandaio's time, detailed legends of the lives of Mary's parents' (St. Anne and St. Joaquim) and of Mary's girlhood were promulgated by the church. Even today, Christians of the Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox churches, and parts of the Anglican Communion teach that the Assumption of Mary was the bodily taking up of the virgin into Heaven at the end of her life. The Roman Catholic Church teaches as dogma that the Virgin Mary "having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory." Yet the story itself is not in the Bible, and most Protestants, particularly Lutheran Protestants, reject non-biblical beliefs as inventions of human imagination, longing, and tradition.

In Lutheranism and most of Anglicanism, the feast is kept, but without official use of the word "Assumption." Thus, the feast day we dedicate to Mary, Mother of Our Lord, is the day of her death. Although we may not believe the Assumption and Coronation stories, Mary certainly deserves a day of her own. We find beauty and joy in paintings of the young mother in Nativity scenes and in Jesus' early life, and later inconsolable grief as an older Mary faints at the foot of the Cross. But in comparison to her importance in Christ's life, there are relatively few inclusions about her in the Gospel narratives. Thus, her appearance in art work tends to be in Christmas card scenes, at the Cross, or in extraordinary scenarios such as this.

The paintings by different artists of the Assumption are fairly uniform in their portrayal of her as an aged woman who has not been spared life's hardships. We are reminded to ponder her earthly life beyond scripture, after the last mention of her in The Book of Acts. We must think beyond the lovely, obedient adolescent who will bear the Son of God and think of her life after she followed him to the Cross. Although she could rejoice in the knowledge of his resurrection, the horror of his death and the loss of his presence in her life scar the face of the dead Mary with the sorrows she experienced.

As a final editorial note, I think the Lutheran handling of August 15 is just right. It honors the death of the mother of our Lord, yet allows us to celebrate her life and afterlife in whatever way we choose. Although I reject the Roman Catholic view of Mary as interceding between us and her son and of her par-

ticipation in the processes of salvation and redemption, I love the vision of her being taken to Heaven by angels and received by her son, Jesus Christ our Lord. What a deserving mother! What a joyous reunion! May we all take a moment this day to thank God for choosing Mary to be the Mother of Our Lord.

Vacation!

Vacation! Janet and I will be on vacation starting August 7 and returning September 7. We will be out of town all that time and out of the country most of the time. We are spending the first week on an Alaskan cruise with a group of friends with whom we were in Bible study for nearly 25 years. We always said that when the last child graduated from high school we would all go on a cruise together. The last child graduated and we are going cruising! After the cruise we will spend three weeks in England, Scotland and Wales. We hope to bring back great pictures.



While I am gone, Pastor Julie Kanarr will be doing Sunday services and providing any emergency pastoral care. Please contact Crissy in the office (360-385-1595) or the congregation president Jim Espenson (360-385-7551) if you have any needs. They will know how to get in contact with Pastor Julie and also with me if it is necessary.

Thank you, Pastor Coe.

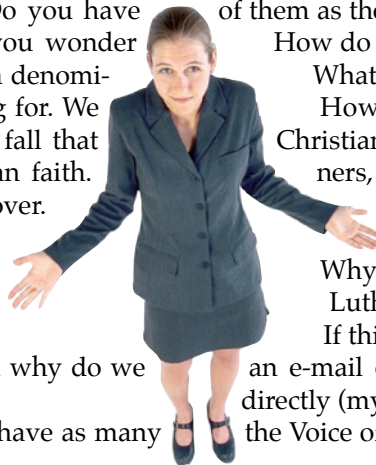
"To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you."

— C.S. Lewis

Christianity 101–Lutheranism 101–Basic Christianity

Would you like a confirmation refresher? Do you have basic questions about the Christian faith? Do you wonder how Lutherans are different than other Christian denominations? This might be just what you are looking for. We are considering a six-week evening class in the fall that would cover many of the basics of the Christian faith. Here are some of the questions the class might cover.

- What is the Bible?
- What is the Trinity?
- Who is Jesus?
- What about the Holy Spirit?
- What are the seasons of the church year and why do we observe them?
- What are the sacraments and why don't we have as many



of them as the Roman Catholics?

How do we understand creation?

What is sin?

How are Lutheran beliefs different than other Christian beliefs? (communion, baptism, saints and sinners, grace)

Comparison of Christian denominations?

Comparison of other religions?

Why do some Lutherans make the sign of the cross?

Luther's Small Catechism

If this sounds like it might be interesting to you, drop an e-mail or telephone call to the office or to Pastor Coe directly (my contact information is listed on the back page of the Voice of Grace). GLC

Food Bank Facts

by Floyd Thompson

The food bank served 77,000 people last year and the need is growing. There were 53 new families added just last week with up to nine people in a fam-



ily. The Jefferson County Food Bank has distribution points in Port Townsend, Tri Center, Quilcene, Brinnon, Forks and the Hoh reservation.

Grace Lutheran Church 2011 giving record:

Month:	Pounds:	Bags:
Jan	105	?
Feb	261	25
Mar	105	23
Apr	197	20
May	173	13
Jun	78	9
Total:	919	90+

The need is great and your contribution of money and/or food helps our neighbors right here at home.

Haines:

a Grad & Mrs.

A very happy Kathryn Haines receives her diploma from Northeastern University. Proud were her parents, Bob and Michelle, who traveled to Boston to witness the big event... followed by Kathryn's marriage to Sean McGriff on June 18. Congratulations on both big events!



from *The Joyful Noiseletter*
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Photos of Summer Activities with the M



Happy fishermen return to Neah Bay after spending a day on the Pacific fishing for salmon. Lynn Bender donated his skill, time and boat to a multi-day men's fishing expedition. To the left, Floyd Thompson shows off his salmon after a wet day on the water Skipper Lynn Bender! Below, Mark Hinkie, Dave Peterson and David Gaenicke display their limit and smile in anticipation of a good salmon dinner.

The Men in Motion of Grace Lutheran Church have conducted several fellowship events this year, including Saturday pancake breakfasts with motivational speakers. Participation is open to all men who would like to attend.



Men in Motion



A particularly fun-filled men's event was the beer brewing day at Gallagher's in Edmonds. Participants were able to select their favorite brew recipe, mix the ingredients, cook the batch in the vat, let the brew, transfer it to the fermenters and, when ready, bottle and cap their beer.

Above, Bill Dengler times the cooking, Claus Janssen tests for proper odor and Andrew Haines mixes the batch. Below, Dave Peterson and Pastor Coe mix the ingredients while Bob Haines observes and offers moral support. GLC



Uganda Concert: a Success!

The members of Grace Lutheran Church have been providing educational support to 21 HIV Aids orphans in Uganda who have exhibited a desire to receive an education in order to improve their future. Assistance has been provided through



The Men's Chorus accompanied by Lisa Lanza on the piano.

contributions covering the cost of tuition, books, basic health care and a variety of other necessary expenses. In addition to providing direct funding for tuition, money is raised through a variety of projects. The latest has been a very successful concert organized by Lisa Lanza. The concert raised \$2,000 in support of our orphan project. Thanks to Lisa for coordinating such a beautiful and successful event. GLC

Have You Shared Your Faith in Christ Today?





From Our Pastor: “The 10 Best Things...”

On July 12, 2011, I completed my first glorious year as Pastor at Grace Lutheran. Boy, has that gone by fast! It has been a great year. I have managed to visit almost everyone in the congregation. If I have missed you and you would like a visit, give me a call and we will find a time to get together (my contact information is listed on the back page of the *Voice of Grace*). As a way to look back and reflect on the year and the blessings that God has sent, I thought I would identify the 10

best things about being Pastor at Grace Lutheran. So here goes—these are not in any particular order:

1. You sing like angels. As a congregation, Grace Lutheran sings better than any congregation I have belonged to. And you are willing to learn new songs and new liturgies. We have a wonderful choir that blesses our worship.
2. And speaking of liturgy, I love that we use four different liturgies. It keeps our worship fresh and keeps us all alert.
3. I am privileged to preach each week and watch your faces as the Holy Spirit moves your hearts.
4. We have excellent Bible studies together with honesty, good questions and wonderful insights. We are growing together in Christ.
5. It is a tremendous honor to share Christ’s body and blood with you, to look into your faces and proclaim God’s love for you.
6. You are trusting me and allowing me into your lives—you are weeping with me during the times of pain or fear and rejoicing with me. This is one of the most precious privileges of being a pastor.
7. You are generous with your gifts and skills and talents. We support many ministries financially and also with our time and talents. The congregation has no debt—a very unusual situation these days. And our budget is balanced and we are financially healthy. Praise God!
8. You are wonderful volunteers and you are always pitching in (altar guild, acolytes, facilities, committees, and many others).
9. You are committed to service to others: quilting, homeless shelter, Pencil Box ministry, Habitat, Ugandan Orphans, Food Bank, ECHHO, and so many others. You check in on each other and care for each other. You live out your faith in the world.
10. You have welcomed me into your homes and fed Janet and me frequently. We are becoming friends.

I can’t stop with just 10; there are so many other good things:

11. Holden Evening Prayer in Lent and Advent is glorious!
12. You have blessed Janet and me with a beautiful parsonage that is comfortable and very nice.
13. The church staff is outstanding. No pastor could ask for better staff than Crissy, Lisa and June. And now Jim and Jeni are providing excellent custodial support. You are all a blessing to the whole congregation.
14. You have excellent lay leadership. I am so thankful for the council and the wonderful way that we all work together. Our meetings are short, positive and productive. Thank you to all you wonderful leaders.
15. Port Townsend itself—the climate, the wildlife (even when the wildlife eats our flowers), the mountains, the water, the arts and music, the people, all of YOU.
16. Our beautiful sanctuary—one of the most beautiful in which I have worshiped.

Thank you for the honor and privilege of serving as your Pastor. I can’t imagine a better congregation to serve. I pray that God will continue to bind our lives together, to enliven our worship, and to equip us and send us out to serve the world that He loves. Thank you, Jesus for calling me to Grace Lutheran Church.

*God Bless,
Pastor Coe*

From Our President: "This Ole House"



I think there might be enough of us who remember the old song "This Ole House."

Ain't gonna need this house no longer
Ain't gonna need this house no more
Ain't got time to fix the shingles
Ain't got time to fix the floor
Ain't got time to oil the hinges
Nor to mend the window pane...

Well, we certainly need our house and we will fix the shingles. This house has served us well over the years. It has been noted that this roof has never been replaced. Not many folks can say their house shingles have lasted over fifty years. God has blessed us with this beautiful house of worship and what a blessing it is. This church has seen quite a bit over the years – everything from baptisms, funerals, weddings, countless church services, and many, many hours of Bible studies and fellowship. It's been well used.

The kick-off campaign to replace the roof was officially started July 3. As we all know additional funds will be needed to complete the roof. After using as much funding as we have available in our budget we will still need another \$11,000.00 to pay the balance of the roof project. At our June 26 congregational meeting, the congregation voted to raise the needed \$11,000 through a fund drive. We hope you will be able to contribute to this important project.

Our church has a strong history of giving, so this goal should be easily attainable. The beautiful stained glass windows were paid entirely by donations (which came to \$50,000.00) and the columbarium was paid entirely by donations as well at a cost of over \$100,000.00. So we know this roof project is within our means.

Our Minister of Facilities David Peterson has done an outstanding job of arranging work parties, meeting with the design review committee, repairing rotted siding, replacing window trim, pulling weeds...the list goes on. Recently, Dave and others have prepared the building for a new paint job this summer. I know that there are many of you who have already volunteered to help paint, and for that we are most thankful. I have heard the phrase, "with many hands the task is light," or something like that. But it's true; the more folks we get, the easier and quicker the job.

We give thanks to God for our house of worship.

Blessings,

Voice of Grace: World Tour



In Santa Monica, CA, Jim Hladecek introduces his two new twin grandsons, Dax Harry and Jet James, to the *Voice of Grace* during a visit with daughter Kristen and son-in-law Peter Diamondis. Weighing in at about seven pounds each, the twins were born on June 13.

Meanwhile, David Gaenicke spent some time fishing while visiting relatives in Wisconsin. David brought along the latest copy of the *Voice of Grace* for reading while waiting for the fish to bite.

Holden Village received the benefit of a strong team of Grace Lutheran members who volunteered to spend a week at the remote Lutheran conference site as participants in a work party preparing the site for the harsh winter months. From the left in the first row are Janet and Pastor Coe Hutchison and the Gaenicks' daughter, Miriam. From the left in the top row are Jim and Jeni Little, Konrad Schewencke and David Gaenicke.

How far can our newsletter travel? Take a copy when you pack your bags and have someone take a photo of you reading in some exotic, or not so exotic, location. Submit the photo to the *Voice of Grace* and have your photo published in the next issue. So far, we have received photos from as far away as Turkey and China. **GLC**



Church Council

President: Jim Espenson
espenson@cablespeed.com

Vice President: Roberta Bymers

Secretary: Linda Cooley

Ministers:

Resources (Treasurer): Anne Argites

Facilities: Dave Peterson

Worship/Music: David Gaenicke

Stewardship: Mark Dembro

Community Concerns & Social Ministry: Bob Threlkeld
Congregational Concerns & Fellowship: Floyd Thompson

Church Staff

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Secretary: Crissy Dunlap
gracelutheranpt@gmail.com

Organist/Pianist: Lisa Lanza

Choir Director: June Mills

Sunday School Superintendent: Linda Wolff
Editor, *Voice of Grace* and Church website:

Jim Hladecek, james@hladecek.com