

# 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

May 2015



## The Blessing of the Quilts

Sunday, April 19, the congregation of Grace Lutheran Church blessed the quilts made by the women of the church before shipping them to Lutheran World Relief. This is one of two shipments made each year to help meet world-wide needs for quilts that provide warmth and comfort to those in need. Every Monday at 10:00 a.m. the "quilting crew" meets in fellowship hall where they assume their different roles and produce dozens of beautiful quilts.

During the Sunday service, the congregation members laid their hands on the quilts, which were spread out over every pew in the church, and they prayed:

*"Blessed are you, O Lord our God, king of the universe. Your gifts are many, and in wisdom you have made all things to give you*

*glory. We thank you for the example of Tabitha whose love for you was shown by her sewing and for these men and women who have fashioned these beautiful quilts to your glory and for the good of our neighbors in need. We dedicate these quilts to your praise and honor. Give us joy in all your works, and grant that these quilts may bring warmth, healing, comfort and hope to the people who receive them, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen!"*

It takes many hands to make this quilting miracle a reality. If you would be interested in participating in this marvelous project – simply show up on Monday at 10:00 a.m. and be welcomed.

Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.



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

## President's Message:

### "Uhhmmm! Comfy!"



On Sunday, May 3, following worship service, Grace Lutheran Church will be hosting a work and pizza party. This is the day we can show up for church in our work clothes and tackle many of the odd jobs that need to get done in and around our church. Jim Little will be coordinating many of the jobs that need to get done, and, with many hands, we can expect to finish before the pizzas arrive sometime between 2:00 and 3:00 p.m. We have had many work parties in the past, and they have all been notable for two special things: First, we really get a lot done and make the facility and grounds beautiful. Second, each work party has resulted in a hearty, "That was fun!" I am encouraging everyone to show up and pitch in.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention that not all the work needed to maintain our beautiful facility gets accomplished only when we have a work party. A wonderful miracle takes place throughout the year as members of our congregation perform regular on-going tasks as well as special one-time tasks. Repairs, painting, mowing, planting, and a great variety of tasks are being accomplished ... quietly, in the background by many of our members to make sure our facility and grounds represent God and our church well.

Our church is known for a number of things. It has been said that we are a most welcoming and hospitable church for visitors. It has also been said that we are (ahem!) a great singing church. I, personally, would venture to say that there is another area in which our congregation shines. Our congregation is involved! Look around the next time you visit the church. Things are going on; there is activity afoot. For instance, drop by after 10:00 a.m. on Monday mornings and you will see poetry in motion. The ladies in the quilting group are at their stations, and quilts are being produced that eventually end up anywhere in the world where there is a need to keep a cold person warm or to give a small child comfort. I even tried them out myself – Uhhh, Comfy! To continue, elsewhere in this issue of the *Voice of Grace* you will see photos of the new Uganda students we are supporting to ensure they have the opportunity to gain an education and become productive, producing Ugandans; and on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays there are five different Bible study groups. For a small church, that is a lot of activity ... and I can go on! We provide shoes for local school children in need; we have hosted several educational forums for seniors; our congregation has provided food and funds for the Food Bank; also through your efforts, we have helped staff and feed the homeless at the local Winter Homeless Shelter; and we contributed our sweat equity in helping build a home for Habitat for Humanity.

Thanks be to God! I just love our church! See you on May 3 when we can share fellowship, the fruits of our labor...and pizza!



## Pastor's Message: *"Grace Lutheran Leads Worship at Women's Correctional Center"*

On Palm Sunday, March 29, 12 disciples (Pastor Coe and Janet Hutchison, Jim and Dianne Espenson, Larry Costello, Anne Stewart, Jeni Little, Joel Peterson, Walter and Norma Massey, Nina Daly, Jane Schwencke) from Grace Lutheran Church journeyed from Port Townsend

to Purdy to lead two worship services at the women's prison. This was the first visit to this facility for all involved. We were met in the lobby by a smiling Sharon Peterson, a wonderful woman who coordinates the worship services. We went through extensive security checks, searches and scans; then, the heavy gates with razor wire on top closed behind us. We were pretty quiet as we walked to the chapel not knowing what to expect. The chapel was a fairly cheery room and we set up, and were ready to go. We anxiously waited for the prisoners to arrive. They came in, all in grey sweatpants and sweatshirts. Things begin to feel more familiar as Pastor Coe opened the worship with his familiar, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all." They all responded enthusiastically. As we sang the opening song, they all stood up, raised the voices and their arms in praise and there we were, the body of Christ. Different histories, different looks, different stories, but the same God who loves us all just as we are.

It was a wonderful and powerful experience. Over 100 women worshiped with us that night. We raised our voices and raised the roof. We prayed together. We may have been quiet going into the prison, but on the way out, we were chattering away, excited about what we had just experienced. All of us said we would go back in a heartbeat. The prisoners wrote out prayer requests that we brought home and have been lifting up to God. Their requests were moving, and it was our privilege to pray for each person.

The photo (page 9) shows the 12 disciples from Grace along with volunteers from other Lutheran churches. After the event, some of the Grace Lutheran disciples wrote a few comments describing the experience. These are a beautiful description of what we all felt. We will be returning to the prison; watch for announcements of future dates.

*God Bless,  
 Pastor Coe*

*See page nine for the photo and comments from some of those Grace members who attended the service.*

# The Last Tape

by Nan Pinkston

The bustle of the hospital was a welcome distraction as I opened my new patient's chart and headed for her room. My son, Eric, had just brought home a disappointing report card, and my daughter, Shannon, and I had argued again about her getting a driver's license. For the next eight hours, I wanted to throw myself into helping people who I knew had much more to worry about than I did.

Rebekah was only thirty-two, admitted for chemotherapy after breast-cancer surgery. When I entered her room, it took me a moment to spot her amid the bouncing forms of three giggling little girls.

I told Rebekah I would be her nurse, and she introduced her husband, Warren; six-year-old Ruthie; four-year-old Hannah; and two-year-old Molly. Warren coaxed the girls away from their mother with a promise of ice cream and assured Rebekah they would return the next day.

As I rubbed alcohol on her arm to prepare it for the intravenous line, Rebekah laughed nervously. "I have to tell you that I'm terrified of needles."

"It'll be over before you know it," I said. "I'll give you a count of three."

Rebekah shut her eyes tightly and murmured a prayer until it was over. Then she smiled and squeezed my hand. "Before you go, could you get my Bible from the table?" I handed her the worn book.

"Do you have a favorite Bible verse?" she asked.

"'Jesus wept.' John 11:35."

"Such a sad one," she said. "Why?"

"It makes me feel closer to Jesus, knowing he also experienced human sorrow."

Rebekah nodded thoughtfully and started flipping through her Bible as I shut the door quietly behind me.

During the following months, I watched Rebekah struggle with the ravages of chemotherapy. Her hospital stays became frequent, and she worried about her children. Meanwhile, I continued to contend with raising my own kids. They always seemed either to be out or holed up in their rooms. I missed the days when they were as attached to me as Rebekah's little girls were to her.

For a time, it had seemed Rebekah's chemotherapy was working. Then, doctors discovered another malignant lump. Two months later, a chest X-ray revealed that the cancer had spread to her lungs. It was terminal. *Help me to help her through this*, I prayed.

One day when I entered her room, I found her talking into a tape recorder. She picked up a yellow legal pad and held it out to me. "I'm making a tape for my daughters," she said.

I read the list on her pad: starting school, confirmation, turning sixteen, first date, graduation. While I worried about how to help her deal with death, she was planning for her children's future.

Rebekah usually waited until the early hours of the morning to record the tapes, so she could be free from interruptions. She filled them with family stories and advice – trying to cram a lifetime of love into a few precious hours. Finally, every item in her notes had been checked off, and she entrusted the tapes to her husband.

I often wondered what I would say in her place. My kids joked that I was like an FBI agent with my constant questions about where they'd been and who they'd been with. Where, I thought, are my words of encouragement and love?



It was three o'clock one afternoon when I got an urgent call from the hospital. Rebekah wanted me to come immediately with a blank tape. *What topic has she forgotten?* I wondered.

She was flushed and breathing hard when I entered her room. I slipped the tape into the recorder and held the microphone to her lips. "Ruthie, Hannah, Molly – this is the most important tape."

She held my hand and closed her eyes. "Someday your daddy will bring home a new mommy. Please make her feel special. Show her how to take care of you. Ruthie, honey, help her get your Brownie uniform ready each Tuesday. Hannah, tell her you don't want meat sauce on your spaghetti. She won't know you like it separate. Molly, don't get mad if there's no apple juice. Drink something else. It's okay to be sad, sweeties. Jesus cried too. He knows about sadness and will help you to be happy again. Remember, I'll always love you."

I shut off the recorder and Rebekah sighed deeply, "Thank you Nan," she murmured as she slid into sleep.

The time would come when the tape would be played for Rebekah's children, but right then, after I smoothed Rebekah's blanket, I got in my car and hurried home. I thought of how my Shannon also liked her sauce on the side, and suddenly that quirk that had annoyed me so many times seemed to make her so much more precious. That night the kids didn't go out; they sat with me long after the spaghetti sauce had dried onto the dishes. And we talked – without interrogations, without complaints – late into the night.

*Editor's Note: This story is in several locations on the internet but was originally published by "Guideposts" magazine. If you are interested in reading more of this type of story, you can subscribe to Guideposts at 1-800-431-2344 or online at [guideposts.org](http://guideposts.org).*



Grace Lutheran has traditionally had a scholarship program, and that program is back for 2015/2016. At the annual meeting in January, the congregation passed the budget including up to \$2,000 for scholarships. Scholarships are potentially available to Grace Lutheran Church members who are attending a school of higher education. An application must be submitted and must consist of the following:

- a. An appropriate grade transcript
- b. A brief, but comprehensive, narrative outlining the applicant's educational plan, financial plan, and personal achievements as demonstrated through church, school, community, and work activities.
- c. Two or three letters of recommendation reflecting the applicant's personal characteristics and accomplishments.
- d. Students requesting renewal of a scholarship will submit an unofficial transcript and a letter of request.
- e. If the applicant is a graduating senior from area high schools, the Uniform Scholarship Application Form may be submitted along with the requirements of Items a, b and c above..

*Applications will be accepted between April 15, 2015 and May 10, 2015 and must be turned into the church office no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 10, 2015.*

The endowment committee will serve as the scholarship selection committee and will recommend applicants to the church council for approval. The order of priority for awarding scholarships is as follows:

- a. Applicants enrolled in a Lutheran seminary
- b. Applicants enrolled in a Lutheran college
- c. Applicants enrolled in any other school of higher education

If you have questions concerning the scholarship program please contact anyone on the endowment committee. The committee members are Linda Hinkie, Keith White and Diane Threlkeld. You may also contact Pastor Coe with questions.

*"God allows us to experience the low points of life in order to teach us lessons that we could learn in no other way."*  
— C.S. Lewis

## Speaking with God

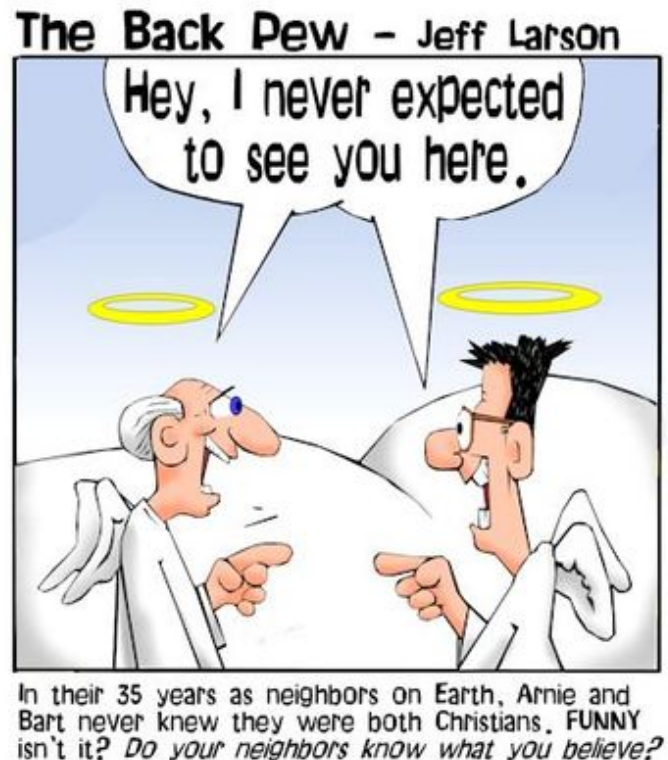
*submitted by Roberta Bymers*



Christian life is prayer. St. Paul provided guidance to "pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18). This suggests that all of life is prayer. Every Sunday we are sent from our gathering around the means of grace to continue our worship, recognizing that all of life is in Christ. It is our prayer life that nourishes our growth toward living all of daily life in Christ.

Often we talk about prayer only as our petitions to God. Our relationship with God should assume a two-way conversation in which we listen as well as speak. Martin Luther colorfully illustrates this, saying, "If we want our prayers to be heard, we must first hear God's Word; otherwise [God] will not hear us either, no matter if we weep and shout till we burst!"

With this encouragement, seek out ways you can listen as well as speak to God so that your whole life may be lived in constant prayer.



## New Class of Uganda Students Accepted

With the approval of the Grace congregation, Kenneth Kasula was authorized as our Uganda Coordinator to select a new group of Ugandan students who would substantially benefit from educational assistance. A total of 13 young students were selected. Kenneth selected these young people based on extreme need and their aspirations in addition to outstanding performance at this point in their pursuit of an education.

Each member of Grace Lutheran may contribute toward the education of these young people by providing a scholarship for one or more of the students in full or in part and by participating in one of the special projects dedicated to help raise funds. Examples of fund raising projects are the annual plant sale sponsored by Sharon and Mark Dembro or the outstanding Uganda Concert coordinated by Lisa Lanza. This year's concert is scheduled for Sunday, May 24, at 4:00 p.m.

Eight of the students are featured here. We have no photos for Rosette Nanono, who is looking forward to becoming a doctor; Victor Nakibanja, a primary school student who wants to become a doctor; Nicholas Lukwago, a senior in secondary school who is focused on the medical field; Esther Nabatte, who is in senior one and aspires to become a nurse; and James Kibalama, who is in senior one and is working to become a doctor.



**Aggrey Mwogeza:** Aggrey is in primary three and is looking forward to a career as an engineer.



**Felix Mugema:** In senior two with the goal of becoming a veterinarian.



**Joshua Walakira:** A primary four student who aspires to become a teacher.



**Christine Nabateregga:** Christine is in senior one at secondary school studying for her matriculation exam.

# ed for Grace Lutheran Church Support



**Hadijah Namayiga:** Hadijah is in senior one at Aidan College studying to become a doctor.



**Brian Kibuuka:** In senior three in secondary school; Brian wants to become an engineer.



Christine is a senior one in secondary school studying to become a teacher.



**Dagalous Luggya:** Dagalous is a primary six student with ambitions to be an accountant.



**Shafick Kakinda:** In senior two in secondary school studying to become a doctor.

## ELCA and ARC Collaborate in Disaster Response

Lutheran Disaster Response has been awarded a \$300,000 grant from the American Red Cross to assist people impacted by Hurricane Sandy in New Jersey. Lutheran Disaster Response is the disaster response ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

The grant is an addition to a previous Red Cross grant of approximately \$1.9 million to assist in Hurricane Sandy recovery efforts in New Jersey, New York and Maryland. This supplemental grant will be sent by Lutheran Disaster Response to its affiliate in New Jersey, Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey.

"Lutheran Disaster Response is pleased to continue the partnership with the American Red Cross as we assist the people of New Jersey who are recovering from Hurricane Sandy," said the Rev. Michael Stadie, program director of Lutheran Disaster Response. "Lutheran Social

Ministries of New Jersey has done an excellent job of serving the people of their state, and this grant will allow them to serve even more people."

The funds will be used in Monmouth, Ocean and Essex counties to help 116 families that have been identified by the unmet needs committees of local long-term recovery groups. Providing for unmet needs is a part of Lutheran Disaster

Response's long-term recovery core component. Following disasters, people who have been affected often have needs that are not able to be met for a variety of reasons. Grants like these allow Lutheran Disaster Response affiliates to provide these people financial assistance and in-kind donations, such as furniture or

appliances.

Hurricane Sandy caused some \$36.8 billion in damage in New Jersey, and Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey has been responding since the storm hit the East Coast in 2012. The supplemental grant will last through 2015 and will further recovery efforts and increase the number of families that Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey is able to serve.



Severe damage to homes along the New Jersey coast.

"Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey is so grateful to have partners like Lutheran Disaster Response and the American Red Cross," said Beth Gebhart, executive director of fund development and the Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey Foundation. "If not for the strength they bring, we would not be able to help so many New Jersey residents. While we have had success in getting people back in their homes, so many more people from New Jersey are in need of a helping hand. The impact from this recent grant will be felt across counties in New Jersey."

Lutheran Disaster Response has a long history of responding to disasters, both domestically and internationally. With a focus on long-term recovery, it is committed to working with the local communities impacted by disasters, accompanying them and providing assistance as they navigate their way through recovery.



**American  
Red Cross**



# Comments About the Purdy Women's Center Service

## A Poem by Nina Daly

The gates lock behind us.  
Our names are replaced by numbers.  
God is here in this place.

Women file in like a sea of gray.  
Mysteries of whys and how longs.  
God is here in this place.

Faces in a sea of gray.  
The music starts; the gray fades away.  
God is here in this place.

Face to face, voices blending, Spirit moving.  
We are the family of God.  
God is here in this place.

## Jim Espenson

I have played music in many different places but never a prison. When Pastor Coe said we are going to Purdy Prison it sunk in – I'm going to prison. As we approached the prison, I got a little apprehensive but once we got through the security search, I felt a little better. When the prisoners came in and the music started I could feel the Spirit. The prisoners were no longer prisoners but God's children. There were tears, smiles, and thanks from them and our thanks back to them. Their prayer requests were heart wrenching and I still read them and pray for them.

## Walter Massey

What did I leave behind and what did I take away? I managed a smile and caught the gaze of a beaming face. Maybe all I left behind was my smile and a Jesus song in her head. Later she came to shake our hands. I will never forget her face ever; that's what I take away.

## Joel Peterson

I didn't know what to expect at all. With the security check points, fenced corridors, razor wire – I thought it might be a harsh experience and I was a little scared.

When inside the facility, we were shown the basic layout with courtyard, library, gardens. Like a retreat center!

The two services were inspirational. There were so many

people who seemed to be happy, trying their best at life, showing signs of past hardship, making amends. I imagined how so many there may be just victims themselves of larger societal problems of poverty, drugs, violence. It's hard to know what's rehabilitation, what's fair...

I really hoped that we could bring something positive and effective. I wanted the women to connect to the worship, to Christ. My desires and wishes were blown away by what was happening: an energized room full of worshipping people. All those smiles took away my fear, I felt the love, and the spirit was moving among us. It was a two-way celebration and my cup was being filled. The worship transcended the razor wire and chain-link fences. It was cheerful. So many voices. Some visibly moved as they worshiped. We just kept singing and the energy was high.

The second service that evening ended with about ten minutes left for the inmates to chat among themselves. Everyone seemed excited. Then, the booming command of a guard broke the mood as he yelled "Recall!" And everyone stood up in an orderly way and began filing out of the room—likely past gardens, library, courtyard...to a prison cell.

I have some of the prayer requests left for us and spent some tearful prayer time for them as I read those small notes with their prayer concerns. ...For loved ones on the outside, for friends inside to keep it together, for children left behind, expressions of isolation and loneliness and earnest hope for visits from family...

I have difficulty explaining to myself and expressing to others about that experience. There was something deeply moving about it.



Volunteers gather for a group photo.

Thirteen Port Townsend artists contributed their work to this year's display of the Stations of the Cross. Illustrated here is "Jesus Dies on the Cross," by Roberta Bymers. *"It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon because of an eclipse of the sun. Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit,' and when he had said this he breathed his last."* Luke 23:44-46

## 13th Station of the Cross

*painted by Roberta Bymers*



## 6th Station of the Cross

*Painted by Earl Kong*

In describing how he approached the challenge of depicting the 6th Station of the Cross, Earl Kong said: *Jesus was dressed in a purple robe and a crown of thorns was placed on his head. My plan was to show Jesus glancing at us so we can reflect about our sins. I placed a sparkle in His eye to represent the forgiveness of those sins.*



## WordFinder Winners Announced



Janet Hutchison and Kathy Gibson share honors as the winners of the April *Voice of Grace* WordFinder contest. They, along with many others in the Grace Lutheran Congregation, attempted to find the 82 names of church members hidden in the puzzle. Although there were several competitors who could find more than 70 names, only Janet and Kathy were able to ace the contest. They both were able to claim the prize. They will now be able to enjoy even more fun with their own copy of *The Everything Bible Word Search Book* consisting of 150 inspirational puzzles. This will help them sharpen their skills for even more difficult WordFinder puzzles in future issues of the *Voice of Grace*.

## Congregational Meeting Date Set

The church council has set June 28 for the next congregational meeting. The meeting will take place right after worship. There is lots to be discussed and council elections will be held. Please plan to attend.

## Mineral Rights Update

The church has received the lump-sum payment for our mineral rights lease of \$36,000. The next step is the discussion of how best to use that money for God's purposes. A committee has been formed to make recommendations to the church council and the congregation in that regard. The committee members are: Linda Wolff, Bob Haines, Tom Larsen, Jane Schwencke, Claus Janssen, Neil Potthoff, & Jim Erickson. The committee will be meeting May 13 and June 7 to discuss recommendations. It is hoped that we will have recommendations for the congregation to consider at the June 28 congregational meeting.

*"I have never known anyone  
to accept Christ's redemption  
and later regret it."*

— Billy Graham,  
*The Reason for My Hope: Salvation*

### Church Council

**President:** Jim Hladecek  
james@hladecek.com  
**Vice President:** Mary Ronen  
**Secretary:** Betty Oakes  
**Ministers:**  
**Resources (Treasurer):** Anne Argites  
**Facilities:** Jim Little  
**Worship/Music:** Nina Daly  
**Stewardship:** Don Fristoe  
**Social Concerns:** Teresa Janssen  
**Fellowship:** Karen Erickson

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**Secretary:** Crissy Dunlap  
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**Organist/Pianist:** Lisa Lanza  
**Choir Director:** Colleen Johnson  
**Sunday School Superintendent:** Linda Wolff  
**Editor, Voice of Grace and church Web site:**  
Jim Hladecek, james@hladecek.com