

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.

Quilts! Quilts! Quilts!



BLESSING OF THE QUILTS

Dear Heavenly Father,

We thank you for giving us gifts and talents to use in service and share our love for others. Place in our hearts a desire to live faithfully and to continue to be a service to others. Today we ask that you bless these quilts that have been the work of our hands and that these quilts may bring comfort and warmth to those who are in dire need of them. We ask that we may continue to serve you and share the blessings that you have given us. To God be the glory! Amen



The Quilts' Story

by Linda Gaenicke



Bonnie Toepke, Stephanie Stephens, Gwen Howard, Mary Carter, Linda Gaenicke, Carol Kong. Not pictured is Patt Roche

Six quilters packed 98 quilts into boxes that weighed 25 to 28 pounds. Each box contained 7-9 quilts that were rolled and tied. This is a very hard job as we need to get the quilts as small as possible so that they fit into the boxes. The boxes are then given two bar code slips, one goes inside the box and the other is taped on top of the box. Then they are weighed. On April 29, they were loaded into Carol Kong's truck and taken to a pickup place in Seattle. From there they will be loaded into a huge truck and stored until needed. The quilters will get a report as to which country our quilts were sent.



All 12 boxes were loaded into the truck and off we went to Bothell.

Each year we sell some of our quilts. This money pays for the shipping of the quilts and also for the batting that

goes into the quilts. Both of these expenses can add up to quite a lot. We rely on material donations, Thrivent cards that members donate to us, and yard sales for unwanted material stashes. This past year we were lucky to receive left over material from a fabric shop. Visits to Goodwill and other thrift stores uncover some good sheets for backs. These are all washed before we use them.

A Mother's Day Greeting

Submitted by Lucy Hladecek

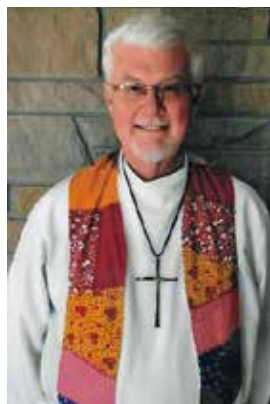
Oh Dear, Oh Gosh, how could I do it,
your Day is here and I'm without;
No card, no poem, not even a bit
of verse or rhyme for me to shout.
I just can't make it Mother dear,
I crashed, I blocked, I must give up;
All has fled for sure I fear
now from Hallmark we must sup'.
Aha! But wait! Yes, I do believe,
there is something formed on tip of tongue;
does my panic try to deceive,
or can I words of rhyme now wrung?
So – Roses are red, and violets are blue,
and all grow strong from the big sun's ray;
We gather together, all of us and you,
our sun, our Mother, on this, your Day.

Jim Hladecek

Giving

Please remember that while we are unable to meet in worship, expenses are still being incurred, including payroll, utilities, and building insurance. You can mail your pledges to the church office. Alternatively, this might be a great time to try out our electronic giving options. You can donate directly through the church website, gracelutheranpt.org. Call Crissy in the church office (360-385-1595) if you need help setting any of the electronic giving options up.

Pastor's Message



"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words." Romans 8: 26 (NRSV)

I believe it is impossible to journey through this life without experiencing, at some point along the way, an absence of words or spiritual energy to cope with our pain. And that

pain may be physical or emotional. Those moments—or even seasons—of loss, despair, numbness can leave us feeling isolated from God and from one another. Although the discomfort can become excruciating, these times are actually an invitation to lean into the Spirit as well as for God to reach out and into us. It's not about the "right prayer." It's not about the "right" attitude. It's not about getting God to listen. For the Spirit is already present in our grief, anger, loneliness—even our disbelief.

"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness.." I remember when I experienced a tremendous loss nearly six years ago. I suddenly felt far from God's attention, affection and truly from God's grace. "For we do not know how to pray as we ought.." Many tears were spent, and agonising nights of restlessness. One night I fell asleep exhausted and had a dream. *I dreamt I saw the Lord standing in front of me on a long winding road.. And as I looked closer and I could see his face.. no words were exchanged.. but I could see tears coming from his eyes. The Lord was weeping with me. He wasn't disappointed with me.. but it became clear that my pain was also his pain. No words— just tears..* It was all I needed that night and all of those other nights that can come from time to time.

Be encouraged in your weakness. You are profoundly known and loved. Although your story is different from mine, God's Spirit will pursue you to the ends of the earth, regardless of feelings and circumstances. Those will come and go. But the Spirit is ever present and "intercedes with sighs too deep for words" on our behalf. That's an Easter promise that keeps on rising on days when we need it most.

Pastor Al



Grace in Transition



Call Committee News

The Committee has reviewed the resumes of six candidates and has held Zoom interviews with three of them. Within the next two weeks the Committee will hold an in-person interview with one of the candidates. Please pray for discernment guided by the Holy Spirit as the Committee seeks a new shepherd to lead Grace.

Sharon

A Note From Mary

Some form of Mother's Day has been around for ages. Early Greeks and Romans held festivals in honor of their mother goddesses, Rhea and Cybele. "Mothering Sunday" in 16th century England was the 4th Sunday in Lent, at which time children were given the day off from work and families gathered together for "mothering cake." At some point during the day they all attended special church services. Anna Jarvis, who had never married nor had children, organized the first official Mother's Day celebration in May 1908. President Wilson later established the 2nd Sunday in May as Mother's Day. It was Jarvis who named the day as a singular possessive, thus making it so that families would honor their own mothers and not all mothers. Mother's Day is celebrated the world over on various days throughout the year.

For a lot of us, May means Mother's Day. I am nostalgic thinking about my mom, as I remember days gone by and realize how much she meant to me and how much I still miss her. I thank God that I was in a position to care for her in her last years. I thank God too for my five children. We have not been able to gather together during this pandemic time; now I look forward to seeing all of them in the near future because of vaccinations. Yes, indeed – the future is looking brighter!

As we get into the month of May, things are looking brighter too for us as a congregation. Council is working on a plan for reopening for in-person worship. Stay tuned for more information on that as things get worked out. I for one will be so glad to see all of you.

Blessings to all.

Mary

Letters from Uganda

Dear Sharon and everyone at Grace,

Greetings to you all through the loving name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! I am hoping that this message finds you all well and I want you to know that we keep you in our prayers every day. Please allow me to report that we are doing fine despite Covid 19 related challenges and the political instabilities due to the recently concluded general elections which left many people with grave injuries, loss of lives, and great abuses of human rights. Our students are all safe as I write this and most now on a holiday break and will all return to school on 3rd May 2021 for a new school term.

Senior four candidates finished their national exams on 30th March 2021, primary seven on 6th April and also senior six candidates finished writing their papers.

About some of our graduates:

I will be updating you about the progress of graduates in the field in my next communications; however, at this time I am glad to report about:

Vivien Nanfuka; Vivien graduated with a bachelor of medicine and surgery, she currently has a contract and is attached to Kirudu National Referral Hospital in Kampala. She works on patients with infectious diseases and also attached to research on opportunistic infections among HIV patients.

Beatrice Nakubulwa; We supported Beatrice to complete a Diploma in secondary education where she majored to teach music; she got a placement as a secondary school teacher and now heads the school. She upgraded her education to a full degree in secondary education.

Lilian Nabulime; is another student we supported through secondary and at University. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in journalism and Mass communication, Worked with World Vision before she went to United Arab Emirates. She returned to the country and about a year ago she went to Turkey for work. In my next communication, I will have established how it is going with her in Turkey.

Gorret Namakula; We supported Gorret through secondary and graduated with a Diploma in secretarial studies; Her internship was with Uganda Judicial Service Commission. She's started a unisex salon and bought herself a plot of land in Wakiso district where she plans to set up her residential house.

Kitumba Charles Backer; He studied electrical installation where he majored in remunerable energy; he works with a number of companies mainly dealing with solar energy systems. He also started a family and now has 2 children.

God Bless You,
Kenneth

Harunah is another graduate -- He runs a village community health clinic.

Dear Congregation of Grace Lutheran Church.

I am very happy to communicate to you again. I greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I thank God for keeping you safe in these times of pandemic. I also thank you for all you do to enlighten children's futures, particularly in Uganda.

I want you to know that I am really thankful to have you in my life. I know I am not strong in all I do but the evident care and love attached to your patience and cheering for me always makes me feel your complete acceptance. I am also thankful because you changed my worries to hope, and cries to smiles. Once again I thank you for understanding me and the struggles you passed through even in uneasy time to make me a good person.

I never felt far from you despite the distances because you are the root of who I am today. You taught me commitment and how to love unconditionally and have an open heart to every one in need and do the most to make others comfortable.

I want you to know that I am proud to have you and I love you so much

Yours
Harunah Mugonza

Grace Gallery

A Time for Hope, Rebirth, and New Beginnings



I always look forward to spring, and even in February, I was eagerly awaiting longer days when I did not have to drive home in the dark. I feel like we are currently seeing a little light at the end of the tunnel. Who would have thought a year ago that we would already have vaccines to fight COVID -19?

Tom and I were invited to and attended an outdoor Easter sunrise service. It was very cloudy and the sun never made an appearance. It reminded me of the first Easter Sunday and the darkness of grief the women must have felt as they walked to the tomb. It also reminded me of the pandemic with all of its



Reopening, by Nina.

sadness and uncertainty. As we sang songs with our masks on and took communion with prepackaged grape juice and wafers, it made me realize that in all the darkness God is there giving us hope and rebirth in Jesus just as he did that first Easter morn.

As we continue to celebrate the resurrection it is my prayer that we will let this feeling of new birth and hope flow through us. Where do you see hope, life, rebirth? This was my question for our Grace artists.

As I am looking forward, I try to imagine what it will be like when we reopen. I miss worship and seeing you! Will we finally get to see Pastor Al lead worship in person? Further down the path of my imagination are exciting thoughts of a new pastor getting installed, and all the joy that new beginning will bring. The artwork I am submitting this month is an oil painting entitled "Reopening." Anticipating that time with excitement, the door is slightly ajar, and God's family is entering. Alleluia, Christ is risen. Let us rejoice in a God who loves us so much!

Nina



I have always loved wildflowers, and in 2004 I took a photo at the corner of San Juan Avenue and Discovery Road. The red poppies were ablaze and the California poppies with their bright orange and yellow looked so beautiful. There were also some blue flowers, I am not sure what they were. Then, a sidewalk was built in that area and all the flowers were gone. In the past couple of years I have noticed that they are trying to come back. It won't be like it was then, but there will be color there again. This is my watercolor painting of that photo.

Gloria

A letter that we would like to share with you:

Dear Church Council President and Church Council, Interim Pastor Al Berg asked us to share our story with you. My fiancé and I don't live in Port Townsend but have close ties there. We plan to get married in the Rhododendron Garden at Fort Worden in May, and were looking for a pastor. One of the first places we looked was Grace Lutheran because of my family ties to the church. My grandparents, Ingwalt and Marion Larsen, were part of the congregation for many years. My grandma taught Sunday School and my grandpa was an usher. I attended their 50th wedding anniversary renewal of their vows at the church back in 1979. My parents, Donna (Larsen) and Paul Crosetto, were married in the church in the mid-1950s. Both my grandparent's memorial services were held at Grace which our family attended.

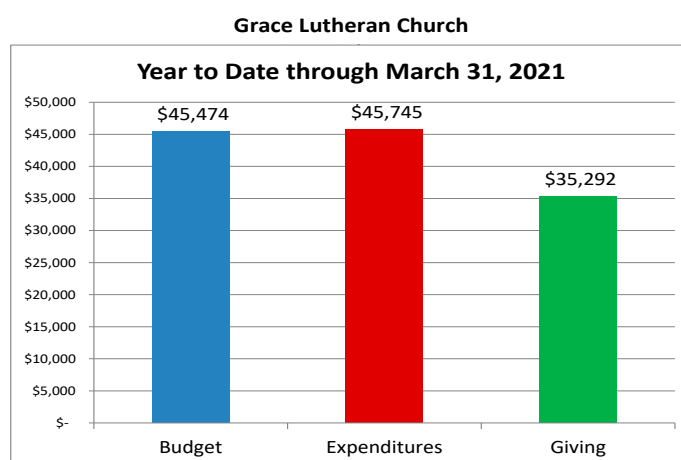
The way we were able to find and contact Interim Pastor Al Berg was through Grace Lutheran's website. We were delighted to find the rich spiritual content Grace's website contains. We very much enjoyed being able to watch Pastor Al's sermons and read the literature posted on the website. The worship was also uplifting. Pastor Al mentioned, and we agree, that the content that Grace is putting online is a great way to not only learn about the church but extend the outreach of Grace's evangelism beyond the congregation and share the Good News in Jesus Christ. It certainly had an impact on us. We came to the site hoping to learn more about Grace's current pastor, but ended up being blessed by his sermons and learning much more about the church.

After telling our story to Pastor Al, he suggested that we write you and the Church Council so that you would know that you are reaching beyond the congregation and Port Townsend with your website. It is an ironic twist of fate that the whole COVID crisis has enabled you to reach beyond your current congregation, proving that there are blessings to be found in difficult circumstances if you make the effort to adapt and reach out, like you have done. We just wanted to let you know how appreciative we are of your effort to reach out online and encourage you to continue with your outreach even after the COVID crisis abates.

As a way of showing our appreciation, we are enclosing a \$100 donation to Grace Lutheran Church. Please use it in the manner that serves the greatest need for your congregation.

May God bless you and your work to serve others!
Jan Crosetto and Kraig Snure

Grace Financials



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Photos of church events may be published in print or online. If you do not want your picture included, please contact the office at gracelutheranpt@gmail.com or (360)385-1595.