



GRACE NOTES

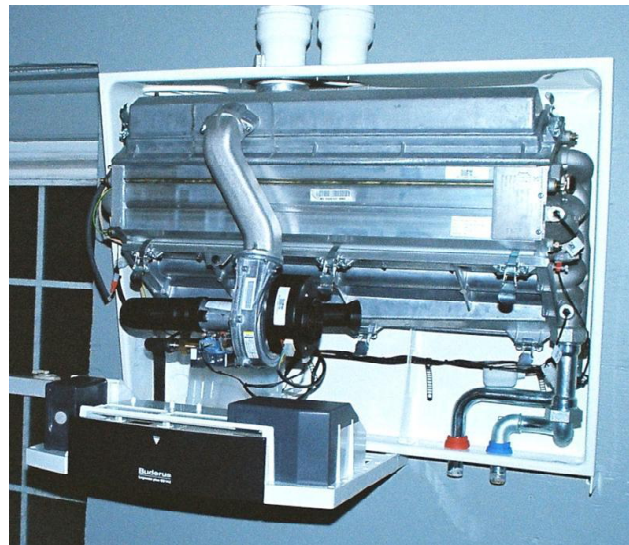
GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH, 46 WOODLAND STREET, HARTFORD, CT 06105 860-527-7792

The boiler is working!



These are pictures of one of our two new boilers and pipes now installed and functioning beautifully. A pot-luck celebration marking the one-year anniversary of the Build Us Up, Lord! building fund included free tours of our spiffy clean boiler room. The boilers are now using propane, and will be hooked up to a gas line as soon as the ground is soft and the line can be installed. If you missed the pot-luck, stop by any time and we'll love to show it off.

Photos by Dale Eberhardt



April

Volume 2011

Issue 4

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Lent into Easter

Note from Pastor

...so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:11-12

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is going to be a marvelous Easter. Surely by then the enormous and very dirty pile of snow on the playground outside my office window will have finally melted. With Easter so late in the year, grass will be green and spring flowers should be blooming. I suppose it also means the ecumenical sunrise service at Elizabeth Park, which is always held *at sunrise*, will be outrageously early. But then, the women went to the tomb "very early" that first Easter morning, and the result was glorious.

In this Lenten-into-Easter month, the Congregation Council and other leaders will be launching a conversation about the future of Grace. According to our by-laws, the

Council must prepare a three-year plan to balance our budget. They must also make some serious considerations about our endowment funds. But this will not be just a fiscal conversation. None of it can take place without also thinking about what the ministry of Grace will be, not just in three years, but in ten. What is God up to? How is God calling Grace to participate, and how will we do that? We are abundantly blessed. For what purpose has God given us such gifts?

A good starting place for these conversations might be the powerful, ancient hymn Paul quoted in his letter to his favorite congregation, the one in Philippi. The last few lines are printed above. We will

hear the whole thing on Passion Sunday. That word "confess" can be puzzling to some. It simply means to state what we believe, as we do when we "confess" our faith in the Apostles' Creed.

The hymn describes all that God has done, and therefore indicates all that we are called by grace to do, *so that* (my favorite phrase, "so that") every tongue - especially our own - should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. It seems to me, if we focus our resources on that confession, the rest of our decisions might not be so difficult.

May the glory of God the Father fill your hearts with joy this Easter and always.

Pastor Steege

Bigger than the ark?

Here are the numbers

When the Lord told Noah to build his ark and Noah built it, two of each kind of animals came to him. The ark was bigger than our church. Here are the numbers. The ark was 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. The

sanctuary at Grace is only 85 feet long and 38 feet wide.

As Noah and the animals entered the ark, the Lord closed the door. After the long trip in the ark, the Lord put up a rainbow and made a covenant never to destroy the earth again.

Ryan Wellington

Ryan is a confirmation student who wrote this article as one of his assignments for his unit on the Old Testament.

Worship Notes

Special guest preacher

The Rev. Aaron Decker will be our special guest on Sunday, April 10. Pastor Decker is the New England Synod Director, Office of Public Policy. He preaches at congregations throughout the synod to present information relating to social justice concerns. On the 10th, the focus will be on Care of Creation and how it relates to World Hunger issues, which has been our theme throughout Lent. Pastor Decker will also be the guest presenter at our Second Hour following worship.

Palm Sunday

Sunday, April 17. This year it's a late Easter, so chances are good that we will have fine weather for our annual Palm Sunday procession, and

we can even have it outside. The liturgy that morning will center around a reading of the Passion According to St. Matthew.

The Triduum

Thursday, April 21, at 7:30 p.m. Maundy Thursday's service will include traditional washing of feet, Holy Communion, and the stripping of the altar.

Friday, April 22, 12 noon - 3 p.m. This year the traditional Asylum Hill Procession of the Cross will focus on the Seven Last Words. The procession will come to Grace at approximately 2:30 p.m.

Friday, April 22, 7:30 p.m. The moving Good Friday service will close with the Adoration of the Cross.

Saturday, April 23, 7:30 p.m. The Easter Vigil will again be celebrated with our Episcopalian brothers and sisters at Trinity Episcopal Church, 120 Sigourney Street.

Easter Sunday

Sunday, April 24, at Sunrise. Ecumenical Service at the Lookout, Prospect Avenue, Elizabeth Park.

Sunday, April 24, 9:30 a.m. On this day the Lord has acted! On the first day of the week God began creation, transforming darkness into light. On this, the "eighth day" of the week, Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. We celebrate this new creation in the waters of baptism and in the feast of victory. With great joy we celebrate this day of days, even as we begin the great fifty days of Easter.

Attention: If you don't have dental insurance, this free clinic is for you!

With an estimated one in three Connecticut residents without dental insurance, two free clinics scheduled this year in Waterbury and Hartford may set records for treatment.

The fourth Connecticut Mission of Mercy clinic will be held Saturday and Sunday, April 16-17, at Wilby High School, 460 Bucks Hill Road, Waterbury, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. both days.

The third annual Inner City Dental clinic will be held Saturday, May 21, at Community Health Services, 500 Albany Ave., Hartford, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Grants totaling \$92,000 have been awarded by the Beatrice Fox Auerbach Foundation Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving

to help support the clinics, which operate on a first-come, first-served basis.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to have your dental needs addressed! Bring a folding chair, a book or some other object to keep you occupied and make sure you arrive early to reserve your place in line!



You are Invited to an Easter Breakfast

Sunday, April 24th

8:00 - 9:15 a.m.

Menu Includes:

Scrambled eggs, French toast, Hot Cross Buns

Assorted Fruits and Beverages

Prepared and Served by the Brown Family

and Assistants

Clean up by anyone able to stay following worship

Ghazi Do Martial Arts Returns to Grace

After a hiatus of several years, Grace is pleased to welcome the return of Ghazi Do Martial Arts Academy. The academy, a project of the African/Latino Academic Martial Arts Society, Inc. (ALAMAS) currently holds classes at the Boys and Girls Club of Hartford, on Sigourney Street. Ghazi Do Martial Arts Academy and Grace Lutheran Church previously had 18 years of collaboration, providing martial arts programs to the children and youth of Hartford. Returning to Grace, the program becomes part of our long-term project to reach out to the youth of Asylum Hill.

ALAMAS is a non-profit 501(c) (3) community-based youth organization formed in Hartford eight years ago by a committed group of parents of students from the Ghazi Do

Martial Arts Academy, martial arts black belts, and other youth service professionals. ALAMAS provides traditional, therapeutic, and educational martial arts outreach programs, as well as family support services to children and parents living in the greater Hartford area.

Ghazi Do Martial Arts Academy, in collaboration with Grace, is offering a new and exciting theater martial arts club for youth ages of 10 - 17. They will have the opportunity to learn and experience theater performances, socialize with other teens, learn martial art techniques, and develop good character and leadership skills.

The club will be supervised and taught by Professor Shihan J. Ghazi who is a 10th

degree master belt, a world karate hall of famer. He has a Master's Degree in Education with 30 years of the martial arts and youth service experience. He is assisted by his daughters Shihani Ghazi and Terraine Jamison.

Terraine Jamison is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with a Bachelor's Degree in Communication. Also, she holds a 7th degree master belt with 2 world titles. Shihani Ghazi, an inspiring 15-year-old youth teacher and a black belt since age ten, has three years of acting experience and is a playwright.

Classes for Preteens and Teens ages will meet at Grace Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 6 to 8 p.m.

For further information please call: Professor S.J. Ghazi (860) 478-6528, or email

Sheikgb1@netzero.com.

Friday night supper gatherings at Grace



The Friday night supper gathering is fast becoming a flourishing part of our life at Grace, with 25 – 30 people coming together for food, fellowship and prayer at 6 p.m. every Friday evening. The average has been about 1/3 people who are already members of Grace, and 2/3 people from the neighborhood. Several of those from the community have become regulars and help serve, clean up, and plan future gatherings.

On Friday, March 4, pancakes were served at a special Mardi Gras celebration. After dinner and some songs, **Darrell Urban**, who leads the gatherings, showed the group how to play a clava and a few other easy instruments, and the led quite a festive parade around the room, all singing "For When the Saints Come Marching In!"

If you haven't tried this evening gathering yet, come by at 6 p.m. and join us in welcoming and getting to know our neighbors.

*Darrell Urban showed the group how to play the clava and other fun instruments before the Mardi Gras parade at the Friday Evening Supper Gathering's Mardi Gras celebration.
Photo by Dale Eberhardt*

Doing What Matters Mission Assembly Events Attract "Spirited" Crowds

How would you like to build your own "Merry-Go-Round of Church" ...or perhaps a "Helicopter to Heaven"? When it comes to Spirit-inspired creativity, the sky's the limit at a "Doing What Matters" event! That's what more than 60 attendees discovered when they gathered at Concordia Lutheran Church in Manchester, CT on Saturday, February 26. "We couldn't have asked for a better crowd," said Kim Bergstrand, a member of the Facilitateam that helped organize the event. "Everyone was so

enthusiastic. They came ready to talk, eager to share, and looking to find resources they could bring back to their congregations."

Representing Grace were **Louisa Barton-Duguay, Dorothea Glatte, Barbara Ruhe, Lloyd and Mavis Smith, and Pastor Steege**. The focus was to work toward a mission statement for the Synod, and thereby also to think about the mission of each of our congregations, emphasizing the transformational work of Jesus Christ in our lives, so

that we may transform the world.

In addition to the dynamic presentation, human talent and computer technology were much on display at the various tables. Some of the participants wrote their own jingles and "tweets," while others used their Facebook pages to ask such questions as, "Why does God need a church?" Thanks to Concordia's wireless connection, responses came back quickly, and made for lively discussions.

Holy Listening

“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; hear me that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David. See, I have made him a witness to the peoples. Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations that do not know you will hasten to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendor.” Isaiah 55: 1-5

The Visioning Group met February 24. We explored the three aspects of Holy Listening: listening to God’s Word, listening to our congregation, and listening to the community. The gatherings on Friday evenings have provided a new window for listening to the congregation and community. Conversation around the supper table has opened us up to listening to where we find warmth, how we overcome hardship, and praying for each other.

The main direction of Visioning and Holy Listening is to help us grow in faith. We continue to wrestle with these questions:

How do we build community grounded in Christ?

What do we, Grace, plan on becoming?

Is there a ministry here for us, or just projects?

What is our ministry to this congregation, now?

The Friday evening gatherings, with a blend of Grace members and community residents sharing a meal and inspired by the Spirit, is where Holy Listening converges. We are a witness to the people and our soul delights in the richest of fare.

Susan Carey

Council Corner

At its meeting March 12 the Congregation Council approved a donation of \$1,000, already in the budget, to the Christian Activities Council, which will be bringing their *Adventures in the City* children’s program to Grace again this summer. The tentative dates for the program are July 11 to August 12. The Council also approved an updated list of members for the 2010 parochial report that will be sent to the Synod: baptized confirmed, 116, and baptized

unconfirmed, 11, for a total membership of 127. Envelope income for the month of February was \$6,776.00, substantially off pace for the annual budgeted amount of \$124,000.00. Jody Wynn Rodiger was approved for membership in the newly formed Outreach Committee, and Bodo was approved as chair of the Worship Committee. At the top of the Council Agenda for April will be the beginning of a series of conversations to address the issue of the deficit budget,

and planning for the future. In this connection, the Council will host a retreat for leaders and all other interested members of Grace Friday Evening, June 17, and all day Saturday, June 18. The retreat will be led by the Rev. Robert Matthias, a facilitator for *Healthy Congregations*, a systems-approach resource highly recommended to Grace by the New England Synod. (Watch for more details in May!)

Creation Care

How is your Living More Simply Lenten Journey going? Have you used any of the ideas from the folder given out on March 6th, or from the covenant printed in the March Grace Notes to help your household reduce your carbon footprint by at least 5%? If you missed any of these items, they are available on the narthex bulletin board and the Creation Care board in the fellowship hall.

We get so used to going about our daily routines that making a change is not easy, but working together and supporting one another, we can reduce our impact on God's Creation. Here are some things that Grace members have been working on to Take The Next Step in their Lenten Journey. *Carry home bags now kept on doorknob so don't forget to take them to the store. *Refuse the plastic bag at the store and just carry out small items. *Two meatless meals during the week. *planning shopping

needs more carefully so fewer trips in the car. *When out on walks or in parking lots, carrying a paper bag to pick up recyclable items. *Wrote letters and made phone calls to Congress regarding the proposed cuts in Clean air/clean water acts and the Environmental Protection Agency. Let's keep working together at home, at work and at Grace to lesson our carbon footprint as individuals, as a congregation and as a nation.



Did you take the Challenge? What we eat and how much we eat also affects God's Creation. When purchasing food, consider where it comes from, how much fuel was used to transport it, what poisons were used to grow it, were sustainable methods used to protect the land?

As of March 9th, eight members of Grace had accepted the challenge to eat less and to eat a more healthy diet. Hopefully they will also experience some weight loss. We have been promised a donation of \$5 for every pound lost, so if you took the challenge, don't forget to report on Easter! Just jot down the number of pounds lost on a sticky note and put it in the folder on the narthex bulletin board. (even if you did not weigh in by March 9th, but are working on losing weight, you can report number of pounds lost during Lent and be part of the challenge. *Creation Care Task Group meets next on Saturday, April 9th. 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Meeting includes a light lunch. If you are interested, come and join us. Members are: Jody Wynn Rodiger, Marty Holmeen, Anna-Marie Potter and Nancy Urban.*

People of Grace

Welcome to **Bear Edward Allen McLarin**, 7.5 pounds, 18", born to **Andrea Sokolwski and Jamal**

McLarin at 5 a.m. on January 23rd. Proud Grandparents are **Barbara Ruhe and Ken Sokolwski**.

Congratulations to **Tyler Colbert**, who has been accepted at Johnson & Wales College of Culinary Arts in Providence, RI.

Habitat for Humanity builds on Asylum Hill

Sixteen Houses; One Community

During the course of the next two years, Hartford Habitat will partner with potential homeowners and almost 10,000 volunteers from local businesses, civic groups, faith organizations and educational institutions to completely transform a section of Hartford's South Marshall Street with a sixteen-house building project, one of the largest, most concentrated projects that Hartford Habitat has ever undertaken.

South Marshall Street is only steps away from some of the State's most historic landmarks and largest companies, such as the Mark Twain House, the Aetna, the Hartford Financial Services Group and Saint Francis Hospital, yet certain sections of the Asylum Hill neighborhood, including South Marshall Street, are considered some of the most blighted areas in the City.

Thirty-seven percent of the residents living in this neighborhood live below the poverty line and typically cannot afford to purchase a home in the City. As a result, many Asylum Hill residents continue to rent space in outdated, sub-standard apartment complexes on poorly maintained streets that are riddled with crime. The planned buildings are across from the apartment complex where many of our Karen friends are living.

A Vision for South Marshall Habitat's vision is to bring the entire community together to invest in this initiative. The theme for this project, ~ **A Community Collaboration for Positive Change**~, is fitting because it takes potential Habitat homeowners, businesses, foundation, faith groups, individuals, civic groups and government to work collectively on a shared vision to create a real change

in the community. As a community, we are committed to investing in Hartford's future, but as individuals, sometimes it is difficult to make a visible, lasting impact. By bringing together many different groups for a common purpose, we can create the real change that is needed in Hartford.

The South Marshall Street project is in the final planning stages with the **groundbreaking set for Friday, April 1. 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

Watch for opportunities to participate in this build, as well as an ongoing build on Laurel Street sponsored by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

Please remember, worship begins at 9:30am each and every Sunday. The psalmist says, "I was glad when they said unto me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.'" Join us for worship each Sunday.

Prayers requested for victims of Japan Earthquake and Tsunami

ELCA Disaster Response is asking for your prayers, as well as financial help, following Friday's 8.9-magnitude earthquake Friday that caused severe damage and led to a tsunami that overwhelmed cities and farmland in Japan and spread around the Pacific Rim. All 22 ELCA missionaries in Japan have reported that they and their families are safe and well. The ELCA and its predecessor church bodies have a long history in Japan, dating back to 1892. The Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church has a rich tradition of education and service to those who are in need, and we will continue to walk alongside our companions in ministry as they respond to the disaster.

Your prayers are the ELCA's first response to this disaster. Please offer your personal as Grace continues to offer congregational prayers for those affected by the Pacific Earthquake and Tsunami.

Contributions can be made to ELCA International Disaster Response for the Pacific Earthquake and Tsunami Response. Your gifts will be used to assist those whose lives and livelihoods have been affected by this disaster in Japan and other affected islands. Thank you for your gifts. Your prayers and partnership are needed.

Ways to give:

1) Checks or money orders may be sent to:

ELCA Disaster Response
39330 Treasury Center
Chicago, IL 60694-9300

Write "Pacific Earthquake & Tsunami" on your check's memo line.

Or you may make the check to Grace with the same memo line and all checks received will be forwarded.

2) Credit card by phone to 800-638-3522

3) Credit card or online at <http://www.elca.org/japanearthquake>

*By the grace of God, we are a Lutheran congregation,
diverse in worship, Christ-centered in fellowship,
committed to prayer, deepening of faith,
and the stewardship of the gospel and God's world.*



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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

PLEASE NOTE:

The submission deadline for the May 2011 edition of Grace Notes is April 15th. Please forward information to Sally Nolen (sallynolen@live.com) by this date. Thank you.

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