



# GRACE NOTES

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

## Christmas Eve Supper a Success!

About 150 people came to our Christmas Eve Supper, chaired by **Gail Lindstrom** and funded by Gail and by a generous gift from our pastor, **The Rev. Paul Santmire**, catering donated by **Peter Spungin**, and music and entertainment coordinated by **Darrell Urban**. All kinds of people helped decorate the room, serve the meal, bake bread, contribute fresh fruit, entertain the children, and distribute captivating Christmas cards with best wishes from Grace. It was anticipated that people would come and eat and leave, but instead, everyone had

such a good time, most of them stayed and enjoyed the evening, proceeding upstairs at 7:30 for our Christmas Eve Candlelight service.

The icing on the cake was that the press came and loved it. The *Hartford Courant* ran a front-page story with color picture the next morning, Christmas Day, and printed a follow-up article the following week announcing our plans to host supper gatherings every Friday night beginning January 14. There was also a story in the *Hartford News* describing the dinner and announcing the Friday evening gatherings. All of the

stories we excellent in their description of our purpose in gathering a diverse community from the neighborhood to come to know and join the faith community that is already Grace.

You missed the story?! Here are the links to the stories: 12/25 Story. <http://www.courant.com/news/breaking/hc-hartford-church-dinner-1225-20101224,0,319555.story> From here there is a link with a set of really good pictures.

12/29 Follow-up story: <http://www.ctnow.com/news/connecticut/hartford/hc-hartford-church-dinner-1229-20101228,0,7826163.story>

## February Volume 2011 Issue 2

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### OFFICIAL NOTICE

## Regular Congregational Meeting for the Budget February 13, 2011 at 11:00am

Also on the agenda:

- Election of Nominating Committee
- Election of Lay Voting Members of the 2010 New England Synod Assembly (These may include two adults and one youth member)

The Council will defer action regarding lightning protection and heating system proposals until a special congregational meeting to be called later this Spring.



[www.graceistheplace.org](http://www.graceistheplace.org)

## Surprise!

### *Note from Pastor*

*"What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him" 1 Corinthians 2:9*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Last month my note began with the observation that spring is on its way. I guess that's still true, but in the meantime we're having quite a lot of snow. People who worship at Grace on Sunday mornings may have noticed that our beautiful new driveway and parking lot are always plowed, and the walkways to the doors are cleared and salted. This is due to the generosity of our neighbor, Henry Zachs, who in two years has never gotten around to billing us for this service. A nice surprise.

Not so secretly, my heart rejoices when there's a good snowfall. It reminds me of childhood winters when the drifts were so high we could build caves in them. We used to make snowmen in our neighbor's yards to surprise them in the morning. I hope they didn't mind!

The best part of a good snowfall is, in fact, the surprise of it, no matter how accurate the weather forecasters have been. How

amazing to get up in the morning and see our familiar world turned into something magical, quiet and sparkling! What a nice surprise when neighbors are out there at the same time, shoveling and admiring the depth of snow - a sudden camaraderie. Somebody remarked that during the terrible traffic snarls caused by the drifts, drivers were actually polite. They took turns!

The Lord has surprised Grace with a lot of blessings recently. Who would have thought so many people would come to the Christmas Eve dinner and stay for the evening? Who would have thought two little Thompson girls would make and hand out 150 Christmas cards would be one of the highlights of the evening? Who would have thought the local newspaper would make a cause of us and put us on the front page twice? Who would have thought the Hallelujah Chorus, which we nearly scrapped, would be the best yet? Who would have thought our first Friday

evening supper gathering, which we may never even get around to naming, would bring such a variety of people and that, strangers as they were, they would be so glad to pray together, as they were and did?

St. Paul needed to remind his fractious little church in Corinth about God's surprises. He used part of a towering poem about God in Isaiah 64, written to encourage exiles returning from Babylon to a destroyed Jerusalem. We need to remind one another continually, in 525 B.C., in 60 A.D., and in 2011 that for those of us who love the Lord, God has prepared surprises we can't even imagine. This is why we at Grace keep trusting God and reaching out. The blessings are always even better than we hope for.

May the Lord bless your hearts these wintry weeks with glorious surprises!

*Pastor Steege*

## Continue the Journey Stewardship Report

**The Stewardship Committee** reports that 31 households pledged a total of \$97,756.00 for Grace Lutheran's ministry in 2011 as a result of this year's program, "Continue the Journey." This contrasts with 42 households pledging a total of \$113,500.00 for the year just completed, for a drop of 14%.

Although a decrease is never welcome news, it may be tempered by two factors besides the fact that some households were lost in 2010 due to deaths or moving out of the area. In this difficult economy, fourteen households actually increased their pledges. In addition, the total pledges for this year closely match the pledged income actually received last year, which was \$101,678.00, so this may be a more realistic figure.

Meanwhile, more good news is that our total weekly envelope giving, which includes all member households, whether they pledged or not, came to \$123,571.00, which is \$3,571.00 *more* than the \$120,000 we budgeted. In addition, our plate offering came to \$610.00, an increase over the budgeted \$500.00. Even the children contributed \$118.00, over the anticipated \$45.00.

The 2010 final numbers will show a smaller deficit than the one budgeted, and the new proposal will reflect this. Final numbers will be available at the congregational meeting February 13, but it needs to be remembered that deficits are real and reflect borrowing from our own savings in order to pay our expenses.

Due to a variety of circumstances, the Stewardship Committee has discontinued meeting for the time being. The Congregation Council will take on stewardship responsibilities until a new committee can be formed. In the meantime, we want to thank the dedicated people who formed the Committee and did such valuable work these past five years, beginning with **Lloyd Smith**, who was the founding chairperson. Thanks also to **Bernie Biederman, Mark Jones, Rudy Lewis, Gail Lindstrom, Ted Steege, Nancy Urban, and Barbara Van Fleet**. We have been inspired and blessed by their work.

## Campaign gifts keep growing

With pledged and non-pledged gifts received reaching \$51,084.02 at the end of just the first eleven months of the Build Us Up, Lord! campaign, cash gifts have reached one-third of our five-year \$150,000 goal.

The total amount pledged so far is \$133,576.80, which

means we need only \$16,423.20 to reach our goal. Hopefully in the coming years we can even reach our challenge goal of \$290,000.

Meanwhile, the steeple is repaired, the parking lot is beautiful, and the front steps are safe and attractive. We still owe ourselves for some of

this work, however, and there is more to be done!

If you have made a pledge, please remember to honor it unless your circumstances have changed significantly. If you have not yet pledged, it's not too late!

## Resolution on Energy Stewardship for Creation Care Grace Lutheran Church, Hartford, CT

WHEREAS, Grace Lutheran Church of Hartford, CT recognizes the 2010 Resolution on Energy Stewardship of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's New England SYNOD, and

WHEREAS, in 2007 Grace Lutheran Church affirmed New England Synod Assembly Resolution 07-10 on GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE by performing an energy audit and moving forward on energy saving initiatives, and

WHEREAS, New England Synod Assembly Resolution 10-01 on Energy Stewardship asks congregations to measure their carbon output and to commit to decreasing it over a certain period of time, therefore be it

RESOLVED that Grace Lutheran Church in Hartford Connecticut accept this challenge of 2010 as a congregation, by committing to reducing our energy-related greenhouse gas emissions by at least 5 percent per year, with the ultimate goal of reducing these emissions 25-40 percent by 2020, and to share this commitment and steps taken to achieve it in a public way in official publications and communication channels of this congregation, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Congregation Council of Grace Lutheran Church urges its members to make a prayerful commitment to Creation Care by supporting green initiatives both within the church building and in our daily lives.

Submitted by:

Jody Wynn Rodiger, Creation Care Team, Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Hartford, CT

Approved by: Congregation Council, Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Hartford, Connecticut, January 8, 2011.

**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.**

## “Build Us Up, Lord” Campaign Set to Exceed Basic Goal: Gifts reach one-third of total after first 10 months

With the steeple refurbished, the parking lot resurfaced, and the front steps repaired, gifts from members and friends of Grace have already reached more than a third of the \$150,000 goal, and anticipated giving from pledges during the rest of the 5-year giving period now equal more than \$156,000, according to year-end numbers provided by Financial Secretary Janice Potter.

Pledges of \$133,577 and unpledged gifts of \$22,482 bring anticipated income from the “Build Us Up, Lord” campaign to \$156,059, including a pledge of \$5,000 from First Calvary Baptist congregation, who worships at Grace on Sunday afternoons.

A number of members have already fulfilled their 5-year

pledges. Total giving to the campaign as of December 31, 2010 came to \$51,065, or 34 per cent of the basic goal, after just 10 months (17 per cent) of the giving period.

Pledges for year 1 of the five-year giving period total \$42,449.36, of which \$28,582 had been received by year’s end. But the first year extends through February, so those who have not yet fulfilled their first-year commitments still have the first two months of 2011 to catch up.

Campaign Chairperson Dale Eberhardt and Follow-up Coordinator Ted Steege emphasized that pledges are good-faith estimates, not legal contracts. People are free to revise their estimate upwards or downwards as circumstances change.

Ahead of schedule on your pledge? Thank you and God bless you!

Fallen behind?

Catch up if you can, but let the church office know if you can’t.

Find a more appropriate level of giving and tell us what it is.

Made a one-year pledge?

Please consider renewing your pledge for another year!

Got a new job or a financial windfall? Prayerfully consider a thank-offering or an increased pledge!

We thank God for blessing this campaign and providing the resources needed to carry the mission of Grace forward in the new decade.

*Ted Steege*

## You Can Help

Here are a couple of nice and simple opportunities you might consider. The first is to contribute flowers for the chancel area. The cost is \$30, and you can either sign up on the chart in the narthex, or call or write the office. This is an especially nice way to honor or memorialize someone you love. (During Lent we use bare branches

from our grounds, which usually begin to bloom around Easter. The cost of the flowers, however, is spread throughout the year.)

Another possibility is to contribute to the cost of The Lutheran magazine. This is a budgeted item, because it is felt that the magazine is such an excellent way to engage us in conversation with the

Lutheran church, both nationally and internationally. If you appreciate the news, pictures, thoughtful articles, and study material, and even the Lite Side and the classified ads, why not send a contribution to help defray the expense? The cost per household is a little over \$7. You could even round it up a little and spring for \$10.

## Creation Care News

Did you hear the news? The Congregation Council has passed a resolution to reduce our energy-related greenhouse gas emissions at Grace by 5% this coming year, AND asking each member to support this effort within the church building and also within our daily lives. (full wording of the resolution is elsewhere in this issue)

Many things have already been done at Grace to help cut our energy use and to follow practices that care for creation—but we need to address other areas in which

we can either reduce, re-use or recycle as we seek to be caring stewards of God's creation.



Members of Grace planned to work together during Second Hour on January 23 to create recycling bins to be used throughout the building. This will help Grace reduce our garbage output by increasing our recycling. We have installed a smaller garbage

container in the Fellowship Hall, therefore using smaller plastic bags. The Creation Care team is providing cloth table coverings so that we do not need to purchase any more plastic table cloths.

AND look for a fun and informative Second Hour event coming on March 6 as we take a look at the food we eat and the effect on the earth, and introduce the "Living Simply" 40-Day Lenten Journey.

*Jody Wynn Rodiger*

## Community guest speaker for Second Hour February 6

**The Visioning Steering Group** has invited Janier Caban-Hernandez to be our Community Guest Speaker during Second Hour on Sunday, February 6<sup>th</sup>. This is part of a continuing series in connection with the steering group's "Holy Listening" process in the community.

Janier Caban-Hernandez is the director of AIDS Legal Network for CT, which is a collaborative project of legal services programs in Connecticut. He is also the co-chair of the Ryan White Planning Council and an advocate in the Latino Community. In his spare time

he is a foster parent to three teenage boys.

The AIDS Legal Network for CT will host an event in recognition of National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day on Monday, February 7, 2011, 5:30 p.m. Please see the related story for details.

## National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

Hartford's African American Caribbean Care Team, funded by Ryan White Part A, will host an event in recognition of National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day **Monday, February 7, 2011, 5:30 pm**

Participants will meet at Zezzo House at 184 Homestead Avenue and walk to Bethel Mission Church on Albany Avenue for a candlelight vigil. After the vigil, come back to Zezzo

House for light refreshments. Please contact Cecilia Lewis at 860-761-6699 x304 or [cecilia@ctaidcoalition.org](mailto:cecilia@ctaidcoalition.org) for any questions.

## Concordia Choir in Concert

Hear one of the nation's finest college choirs, from Concordia College (ELCA of Moorhead, Minn.), perform Monday, February 21 at 7:30 PM in Battell Chapel - Yale University. René Clausen conducts the 72-voice a

cappella choir in several spirituals and hymns plus some new dramatic Clausen arrangements. Visit [www.TheConcordiaChoir.org](http://www.TheConcordiaChoir.org) today for complete concert information! This is the Choir you enjoyed from the national

PBS Christmas Concert special.

Tickets \$20 Adults \$10 Students. Tickets are available at [ConcordiaTickets.com](http://ConcordiaTickets.com), 1-800-838-3006 and at the door.

## ELCA launches new website

**LivingLutheran.com** serves up a daily blend of culture, conversation and community for ELCA members and friends. They're looking for answers about what it all

means and hope you'll stop by to put in your two cents.

You won't find breaking news here, although there's plenty of commentary on what's happening in the world and

what ELCA members think about it. Find resources for congregations, videos to inspire and amuse and places to share what's on your mind.

**LIVING LUTHERAN**  
A daily blend of stories, culture, and community

## Abundant Life Family Center Says Thank You to... *Thrivent Financial for Lutherans*

**Arts education is critical** in the development and understanding of the greater world for inner city kids. In response to a grant request endorsed by Thrivent members of Grace, the Hartford Chapter of Thrivent provided \$562.00 for art supplies.

Fall programming for kids in foster care are planned to heal the wounds of racism and inter city poverty with positive empowerment. Our goal is to provide art therapy to youth ages 5 -12 and recreational programming for teens ages

13-18. All the art therapy projects and activities are held at the center and recreational activities take place at local gyms.

The grant helps pay for supplies for arts programming, gas for transportation, fees to museums, destination and speaker education fees, food for snacks and celebration events. Costs for recreational programming consist of uniforms, T-shirts and shorts for teams.

A check for \$400 was presented to **Maribel Santana**

in early January, but Tracy Carlson of the Hartford Chapter of Thrivent found a little extra money in the chapter treasury at end of year, to bring the total gift to \$562.00.

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, a faith-based, not-for-profit [membership organization](#) nearly 2.6 million members strong, is a Fortune 500 financial services organization with the strength of more than \$67 billion in assets under management. It is the nation's largest fraternal benefit society.

## Don't delay: Saving today is one of the best ways to secure your retirement

Most people nearing retirement have an important piece of advice for those in their 20s and 30s: Start saving for your retirement now.

Although most boomers are optimistic about retirement, if they could do it over again, many would get serious about their future needs much earlier in life.

In fact, according to a fall 2006 survey of 2,500 U.S. adults age 45 to 64 by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, many baby boomers want others to learn from their mistakes. For example, 86% of those surveyed urged younger generations to start saving as soon as possible.

Interestingly, while 56% of boomers expect to enjoy a standard of living equal to or better than their parents, their confidence is not well-founded.

A majority of those surveyed have not made any formal retirement preparations. What's more, they're more likely to consult with family than a financial professional regarding retirement strategies. This may help to explain why 71% of baby boomers worry about not having enough money in retirement.

Regardless of where you are on your journey to retirement, there's never been a better

time to get serious about preparing for what lies ahead.

If you need help preparing for retirement or would like to discuss how Thrivent Financial can help you achieve your financial goals, contact Matthew Kellie, Financial Associate at (860) 646-2296 or [matthew.kellie@thrivent.com](mailto:matthew.kellie@thrivent.com) today, or visit [thrivent.com](http://thrivent.com).

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## Church Staff Directory

The Rev. Eva Reque Steege, Pastor  
(Emergency Phone 860-882-7715)  
Dale Eberhardt, Organist  
Catherine Tomlinson, Parish Administrator  
Janice Potter, Financial Assistant  
Jacqueline Funches, Parish Assistant  
Miriam Miller, Sexton

Mavis Smith, President  
Emma Coleman-Carr, Vice President  
Bruce Klotz, Secretary  
Gertrude Kanwischer, Treasurer  
Barbara Calogero, Assistant Treasurer  
Sally Nolen, Grace Notes Editor

### ***PLEASE NOTE:***

*The submission deadline for the March 2011 edition of Grace Notes is February 15th. Please forward information to Sally Nolen ([sallynolen@live.com](mailto:sallynolen@live.com)) by this date. Thank you.*

[www.graceistheplace.org](http://www.graceistheplace.org)

