



# GRACE NOTES

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

## Adventures in the City 2011 Educational – Enrichment Summer Program

Children pre-K through Grade 5  
Monday, July 11 to Friday, August 12  
Staying Healthy: HEALTH IS LIFE!  
At Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

Sponsored by  
**CHRISTIAN ACTIVITIES COUNCIL**  
47 Vine Street, Hartford

**FOR REGISTRATION CALL 860-527-9860**

Regular program 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. \$50 1st child;  
\$30 for each additional child in the family.

Extended day 7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. \$250 first child; \$150 for each  
additional child in the same family.

Note: Due to generous donations from foundations, corporations,  
friends, and churches, we can offer this program at this low cost.  
Our actual cost is \$400 per child, not counting extended day care.

Volunteers are always welcome. If you would like to read to  
children, spend a little one-on-one time with an anxious child, help  
serve snacks, chaperone on a field trip, or help with projects, just  
stop by. You'll have a great time!

**July/August**

**Volume 2011**

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*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.*

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



## Summertime

### *Note from Pastor*

*"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."* <sup>Matthew</sup>  
11:28

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am writing this at the end of a long day (and previous evening) of fascinating conversation with the Council and other congregational leaders at their Healthy Congregations retreat. It's already a couple of days past Sally's copy deadline, and at the same time too soon to absorb and distill all that was learned and discussed. Anyhow, it's not the kind of thing that will produce a concise report. Each participant will have a different take on the experience. The workshop gave us all kinds of things to think about in the areas of group dynamics and congregational systems. Can we recognize that the way each of us is present and participates in the life of Grace affects the participation of everyone else? How do we handle conflicts? How do we avoid responding to one another out of anxiety instead of out of healthy self-differentiation (a fancy term

for knowing who you are and what you are about) and a firm grasp of our overall mission and vision? How do we affirm one another's ministries and keep lots and lots of lines of communication open? All this in a time of many changes in the life of a small congregation and the stark reality of an ongoing budget deficit.

Fortunately, we have a summer before us with time to take a breath and give things a bit of a rest. The Council will not meet in July. I hope this will be a time when many of us can rest and re-create. Jesus, after all, was there when summer was created. He was not willing for us to be exhausted. In fact, he has offered to take our burdens on himself. Animals who are expected to pull heavy weight are sometimes yoked together to increase their capacity to carry a load. Jesus invites his followers to be yoked with himself. That is quite a partner to assist in carrying

weight. No wonder he predicts the burden will lighten. He promises rest for our souls - a deep rest for our weariness.

So. Take a break. Remember we have a Partner in our work, and sometimes we can just put our load down. If you are out of town, I hope you will attend a church and come back refreshed, and with new ideas for us. (Before you leave, you might remember your pledge to Grace, since expenses - except for heat - do not take a break.) If you stay around Hartford, take advantage of our beautiful parks. Skip cooking on a Friday evening and come to one of the gatherings at Grace. Stop by on a Wednesday noon and sit with the Prayer Circle.

Most of all, remember we are not left alone with all our cares and concerns. Jesus is a gentle and humble partner. Jesus provides rest for our souls.

Blessings to all,

*Pastor Steege*

## Council Corner

At its June 11 meeting, the Congregation Council again spent a substantial amount of the agenda in a study of stewardship, and in that context continued its discussion of reducing our deficit budget and our future ministry. The Council studied material from *Ask, Thank, Tell*, a resource originally used in planning the Build Us Up, Lord, campaign. The focus was on the difference between "membership" and "discipleship." When we focus on the giver's need to give rather than the church's need to receive, we help one another grow in our relationship with Jesus, find ourselves using language of discipleship rather than membership, find in God's word an invaluable wealth of resources to enrich our understanding, and ask the discipleship question: "How is God calling me to respond to God's presence in my life?"

In examining our finances, it was noted that weekly

envelope offerings in May (a five-Sunday month) came to \$12,248. On a weekly basis, that would have us slightly ahead of our annual budget target of \$124,000. We have also saved substantially on our heating bill, partly because of our new system, and probably mostly because we have come into warmer weather. We will know more when we get through the next winter.

Tentative approval was given to a new agency, *We Make a Difference*, to use a small space adjacent to the Forum Room. *We Make a Difference* is in the process of acquiring 501c3 non-profit status and preparing a financial plan. Headed by Eve Christian, who first came to Grace through our Friday evening supper gathering, the agency's overall purpose is to train individuals to advocate for their needs and the needs of their neighborhood. The objective includes comprehensive community development to promote livable

neighborhoods. A sampling of issues to be addressed includes tenants' rights, homelessness, and employment for ex-offenders.

The Council also considered a proposal by the Constitution Task Force for job descriptions for Treasurer and Financial Secretary. The Financial Secretary is mentioned in the congregation's constitution as an optional office that can be activated. Since our present Financial Assistant is a paid staff position, the Council voted not to approve the proposal.

The next Council meeting will be August 13. In the interim, questions and concerns may be brought to any member of the Executive Committee: Emma Coleman Carr, President; Maribel Santana, Vice President; Bruce Klotz, Secretary; and Dale Eberhardt, Treasurer.

## Gift from Thrivent

The Hartford County chapter of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans has presented Grace with a grant of \$200 in support of the Friday night

supper gatherings. Thrivent, a faith-based, not-for-profit membership organization nearly 2.5 million members strong, is a Fortune 500

financial services organization with the strength of more than \$73 billion in assets under management.

## Doing What Matters to God

### 2011 New England Synod Assembly

Sent forth in prayer, and baptized into service, hundreds of Lutherans could be found “doing what matters to God” in and around the city of Springfield on the Saturday of the synod assembly June 3-5. It seemed everywhere you looked that bright, sunny day men and women in blue T-shirts were building and rebuilding, cleaning and clearing, painting and planting, working in gardens, playing with kids, distributing meals, packing food and health kits, knitting prayer shawls, writing letters of advocacy, and singing in nursing homes.

Since they had been prepared in advance, few attendees came to synod assembly this year expecting “business as usual.” But most of them found their hearts touched

and their hands employed in new and surprising ways.

God’s purpose for the New England Synod is to go where love leads, to serve where love calls. Members of one service team did just that by assembling hygiene kits for clients in the LSS Services for New Americans program in West Springfield, Mass., who were left homeless when a deadly tornado struck Western Massachusetts and Central Massachusetts June 1. **Lloyd Smith** and his team helped raise a barn for a group of refugees who are creating a vegetable farm. **Vera Yigle-Kaljob and Darrell Urban** and their team spent a day of fun and adventure with underprivileged children. **Jody Wynn Rodiger** joined a

large group of Lutherans learning about advocating for justice in many areas, include world hunger. **Pastor Steege** joined a team who went to the Soldiers’ Home in Holyoke, where they sang a good number of familiar hymns, and spent time chatting with residents and their families.

#### *Assembly Highlights now available on line*

There was also wonderful worship and inspiring reports from Synod, Church and agency officials. **All three resolutions and the one memorial were PASSED as presented.** The text of the sermon Bishop Margaret G. Payne gave on Sunday, June 5 and other documents, videos and pictures are now on line at: [www.nesynod.org/events/synod-assembly](http://www.nesynod.org/events/synod-assembly).

### Note

**Pastor Steege** will be on vacation July 18-29. Then she and **Lloyd Smith**, who have both been elected by the New England Synod to be members of the 2011 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, will be in Orlando August 15-19.

**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.**

## About the Worship Committee

The worship committee meets monthly to plan services. Members are Bodo Jahn, Bruce Klotz, Dale Eberhardt, and Pastor Steege. They consider themes in readings appointed for each Sunday or special service, then select hymns that develop and reinforce those ideas. Lessons, sermon, and hymns create a service as a coordinated whole.

For communion distribution they select one or two hymns. For prayers for healing they select one or two appropriate hymns.

This Far by Faith (TFF) is available in Braille, as is the old Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW), but not the new Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW), so each week some

hymns are used from TFF and LBW, and many LBW hymns are included in the ELW.

When newer hymns are used from ELW, the words are sent in advance to members who use Braille, so the words can be transcribed.

When a large supply of hymns fit the theme of the day, the final choices depend on mixing new and old hymns. ELW has a wide variety of new hymn texts and new tunes. The committee likes to explore and use new hymns and generally the congregation sings them and learns them. Sometimes new words are set to familiar hymn tunes.

That leaves less time for old favorites so in recent weeks an invitation has asked people to

request their favorites. Two dozen favorites have been requested at this writing, and some now are scheduled for Sundays to mid-July. Happily, the most requested hymn is How Great Thou Art, a favorite of the committee, which had already selected it for the Psalm song on Pentecost.

If you have favorites that we have not sung in church recently, please feel free to ask for them, or bring them any ideas you might have. Talk to any member of the worship committee. Better yet, join the committee!

*Dale Eberhardt*

## Courant Visits Prayer Circle

Actually, we didn't make it into the Courant newspaper this time, but when we finished our Wednesday noon prayer circle on June 1 we discovered a photographer from the Hartford Courant, Mark Mirko, was sitting quietly nearby.

He asked permission to ask some questions and take a picture. He said he had driven by on his way to another assignment, noticed us praying under the tree in the front yard, crossed the river, and then turned around

and came back because he was so compelled by what he had seen.

Even if the result didn't make the paper, we know at least one person - Mr. Mirko - was blessed, as were we. In a note a few days later he thanked us and said, although they didn't publish anything in the paper, he did make a post about it for the photo department's blog. You can find it at <http://blogs.courant.com/photo/2011/06/the-fog-of-peace.html>

The prayer circle meets every Wednesday for about half an hour, beginning at 12:15. In nice weather, the staff puts chairs - enough for the staff and plenty of extras - on the grass in front, under the cherry tree. The hope is that members of Grace as well as neighbors passing by will join the circle. Prayer is simple, quiet, and deeply refreshing. You are invited to join us!

## Books for Prisons

There is a great need for books in the prisons of Connecticut. My young friend reports that all there is to read are romances and westerns. Another friend who has spent time in the Hartford holding facility says they would fight over the books. And a woman I met exclaimed happily at my

house when she discovered a book that she could finally find out how it ended, because she had read only half of it many times. The other half had gone missing long before it came to her.

As long as the books are in good conditions, any books are good. There is a need for books written at a grade 5 - 9

level as well. Many of the people in our prisons have not completed grade 12. The prison libraries gratefully accept all books. If you bring them to church, we will see they are delivered.

*Louisa Barton-Duguay*

## Blessings in a Backpack

As you know, the congregation at Grace has been collecting food for the children at West Middle School so they do not go hungry on weekends. Some of us are currently looking into Blessings in a Backpack. It is a program operating in 115 schools over 19 states designed to feed elementary school children whose families

qualify for the federal Free and Reduced Price Meal program and have little to no food on the weekends.

Better test scores, improved reading skills, positive behavior, improved health and increased attendance have all been attributed to the success of this program. Every Friday, students receive their

backpacks with staples that require little to no preparation. They return with their backpacks on Monday ready to learn. Please watch for a special guest speaker to tell us more in the upcoming months. To go ahead with this kind of a program we will have to have many volunteers, so if this interests you contact Louisa at Grace, ext 11.

## Grace Receives Gifts

Grace has recently received several generous bequests and gifts:

Lew Manchester, in memory of Judy Manchester

Maribel Santana, in memory of her sister, Iris Perez  
Tom Lukach, conveying a bequest from the estate of his father, Frank Lukach.



In addition, two special gifts have been made to the **Build Us Up, Lord** campaign, one from Robert Jensen in memory of his mother, Helen Jensen,

and \$1,700 from Concordia Lutheran Church, Manchester, the second of their three-part pledge of \$5,000.

We give thanks to God and to these generous people who so generously honor and support the ministry of Grace.

## Sewing Group Formed

A new SEWING GROUP is meeting in the education room on Tuesday afternoons. It has quickly grown to nine women, two teenagers and three little boys. We have been exploring making our own shopping bags out of new and recycled fabrics, adding sturdy bottoms, sides and pockets. We will be adding appliqué, embroidery and beadwork to the bags to make each one unique. We also want to try hat making.

Some of the participants have expressed interest in quilting, knitting, and crocheting as well. The talents of the group

vary so there can be a good exchange of knowledge. Once members of the group are familiar with the space they will be able to come on a drop-in basis to use the equipment and to enjoy a cool space on hot summer days. When the Children's Summer program is here the sewing group will move up to the Forum room.

Everyone is welcome to participate, drop in for a visit, or come and share your talents any time between 1 and 3 p.m.

*Louisa Barton-Duguay*

### Louisa's Wishlist

- Assistants
- Sewing machines
- Knitting needles, crochet hooks, embroidery hoops and thread
- Iron and ironing board
- Cloth, thread, wool, beads buttons,
- Sheets for quilting and linings for bags
- Clothing where material can be re-used
- Pillow cases for childrens' shopping bags
- Computer with wireless card for education room
- Other stuff you may have?

## Welcome!

With awe and thanksgiving we praise God for the birth **Jamal Dwan Thompson**, who was born Monday, June 13 at 5:47 p.m. to Bri O'Toole and Dwan Thompson. He weighed in at 8 lbs 8.4 oz.

Phyllis and Chad Thompson, proud Nana and Papa Anna-Lee and Catherine, proud Aunties Shirley and Phil Williams, proud Great-Grandparents

Cathy and Mel Thompson, proud Great-Grandparents

May the Lord watch over and bless this new life.

## People of Grace

On Saturday, June 18 at 4 p.m. Concordia hosted the ordination of **Kari Plymette**, who has been called to Ebenezer, Willimantic. Pastor Plymette, a recent graduate of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, gave her call sermon at Grace on April 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Congratulations to **Kelly Nolen**, who has been accepted into the Vermont

Youth Today AmeriCorps/ VISTA program. She will be serving with the Washington County Youth Service Bureau based in Montpelier, VT; her year of service begins in August. Kelly will be responsible for public relations, fundraising, outreach, and volunteer recruitment.

On the move! **Jane Egan** has moved to the West Hartford

Health Center, 130 Loomis Drive, West Hartford CT 06107. **Inger Morgan** has also moved. She's now at Village Gate #329, 88 Scott Swamp Road, Farmington, CT 06032. Her new phone number is 860-676-4810.

**Barbara Ruhe's** best e-mail address is [bjruhe@snet.net](mailto:bjruhe@snet.net). This works better than the one in the current Parish Directory.

## Happy Birthday!

July	1	Lee Manchester Anna-Lee Thompson
	3	Gail Lindstrom
	10	Chet Brodnicki
	14	Brian Phelan
	18	Belinda Yigle-Kaljob
	21	Kelly Nolen
	23	Adrian Mathura
	24	Deborah Weed
	26	Edith Mamet
	August	1
3		Alexander Mathura
9		Seth Phelan
10		Kevin Yigle-Kaljob
12		Ted Steege
14		Irene Kirschner Eric Crawford
21		Susie Brown
27		Nancy Urban
31		Cephus Nolen, Jr.



## Kids Talk

Boy are my feet sore! I took a walk this morning, around the block and it really hurt me. I think there's something wrong with my shoes. It could be they're too big. Well, what difference does that make? If your shoes are too big, they might give you blisters or fall off. Or maybe they're too small. If they're too small, your toes get all cramped up and that hurts too. How does it feel when you have shoes on that are just the right size?

That reminds me about something Jesus said. Jesus promised his disciples that if they would serve him, he would give them an easy yoke. Do you know what a yoke is? It's what you put on an ox when you want it to pull something. You can probably find a picture of a yoke if you google it. A yoke that didn't fit well would hurt the ox, just like having on the wrong size shoe.

You see, Jesus knew that there are a lot of people in this world who are living lives that hurt them, that make them sad and sore. So he said he would change that. He would lead people to have lives that fit them perfectly. He would give them work to do that matched their gifts, work that would make them happy. When your work fits you perfectly, then it's no longer a burden. In fact, it can even be a joy!

We can give thanks to God for giving us gifts and talents, and for calling us into life-work that is made just for us. If we serve Jesus, he will match us up perfectly with what we need, and what the world needs from us.



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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
*God's work. Our hearts.*

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

*The submission deadline for the September 2011 edition of Grace Notes is August 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)

