



# GRACE NOTES

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

Grace Congregation Council invites you to join them at the

## *Healthy Congregations Workshop*

Friday evening, June 17, 6:45 - 9:15 p.m.  
and Saturday, June 18, 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
(continental breakfast at 8:30 a.m.)

at Trinity Episcopal Church, 120 Sigourney Street,  
Hartford, CT

Gain understanding and skills for functioning together in ways that focus on accomplishing our mission, while maintaining positive relationships even in challenging times.

Discover a new and fresh way to think about our congregation and to "hang tough" in moving ahead on mission and goals - even when changes are happening.

Begin thinking about the larger picture in the congregation and how, in particular, to deal with the emotional nature of our human systems.

Leader: The Rev. Bob Matthias, trained facilitator with Healthy Congregations, Inc.

Cost: \$15 includes the cost of materials, supplies, and lunch; each person also receives additional reading material, handouts, etc.

**Sign up by noon Friday, June 3,** by calling the office, 860-527-7792, or e-mail [officeatgrace@sbcglobal.net](mailto:officeatgrace@sbcglobal.net).

**June**

**Volume 2011**

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## Pentecost

### *Note from Pastor*

*For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.* 1 Corinthians 12:13a

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It's time to get out our red shirts and blouses, red sweaters and jackets, red ties, red socks, red ribbons, maybe even red slacks or skirts! June 12 is Pentecost – the third great festival of the Church, with Christmas and Easter. The secular world has never made as much of it as it does Christmas and Easter. We can be thankful for that. Nevertheless, on that day all of Christendom gussies up its churches with red flowers and red candles and gorgeous red paraments (those are the cloths that cover the communion and reading tables), and celebrates the presence among us of the Holy Spirit.

The festival gets its name from the Jewish festival of Pentecost, observed fifty days after Passover. On the fiftieth day of Easter we celebrate the Holy Spirit as the power of God among us that heals, forgives, inspires, and unites. When we were baptized, the minister made the sign of the cross on our forehead and

said: “Child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.”

Jesus made it clear to his disciples, first, that he would send a Comforter, and second, that they were to stay in place and wait until the Spirit came. I don't see how the Christian faith could survive without the Holy Spirit, any more than a baby can survive until it takes in that first gasp of air.

So we, too, wait. We know in our minds that we have been sealed by the Holy Spirit, that the Holy Spirit is in us and around us and everywhere. We know that we have been sealed by the Spirit into one body of faith. But sometimes, given that the Spirit is also invisible, it's hard to discern. Sometimes we feel dry and maybe even a little lifeless. Stuff going on in our lives can be discouraging – dis-spiriting. Prayer helps, of course, although prayers are not always answered the way we want when we want.

Sometimes we just have to pick ourselves up off the couch and move forward with whatever faith we might have. I used to call my former mother-in-law, whom I dearly loved, from time to time when she was well into her 90's, living in Maine. The trouble was, I didn't call her very often. I was busy. I didn't feel like I had much to say. Of course, the longer I put it off, the harder it was to make the call. I dreaded it. What if she was mad at me? Actually, she was never mad at me, but there could always be a first time. I put it off a little longer. Finally I made the call.

“Oh, hello, Sweetheart!” she sang.

The Holy Spirit was there all along. That day the Spirit spoke to me through Muriel David.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you at Pentecost.

*Pastor Steege*

## *Children's program to return this summer*

### **Staying Healthy: HEALTH IS LIFE!**

Again this year Grace is pleased to welcome *Adventures in the City*, a program of the Christian Activities Council (CAC), who will bring its five-week summer enrichment program to our church.

The program, for children Pr-K through Grade 6, will begin on Monday, July 11 and run through Friday, August 12<sup>th</sup>. The fees for the regular program are \$50 (for the entire program) for the first child, and \$30 for additional children in the same program. CAC will also provide and extend day program from 7:30

a.m. until 5 p.m. The fee for this is \$250 for the first child, and \$150 for each additional child in the same family. CAC notes that due to generous donations from foundations, corporations, friends, and churches, including Grace, they can offer the program at this low cost; their actual cost is \$400 per child, not counting the extended day.

"Staying Healthy: HEALTH IS LIFE!" is the theme for this educational-enrichment program. The Adventures in the City program has been sponsored by CAC for thirty

years. This year there will be new program directors and a new creative partnership with Sankofa Kuumba – facilitators of the enrichment activities.

Members and friends of Grace are encouraged to spread the news about this program, and also to stop by at any time to assist, hand out refreshments, read a story, or just befriend a child on behalf of Grace. For registration information, call the CAC office (not the church!) at 860-527-9860.

## **Two new programs at Grace**

**We welcome the Asylum Hill Family Center**, a program of Catholic Charities, who will bring a six-week cooking class to Grace on Wednesday mornings from 10 a.m. until noon. The series, being held in our Community Room, began on Wednesday, May 18th.

The following week, on May 26th, a six-week series of Zumba classes for adults was scheduled to begin from 4:45 – 5:45 p.m. p.m., also in the Community Room.

Asylum Hill Family Center is part of the Brighter Futures Initiative of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

It is designed by parents and community residents of Asylum Hill as a vehicle to strengthen and empower families. The Family Center offices are a block away from Grace on the corner of Niles and Gillett Streets.

**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.**

## Noontime Prayer Circle meets on Wednesdays

The staff at Grace has been talking for some time about the idea of gathering once a week for a time of prayer.

NOW seems to be a good time! On Wednesday, May 18, the front doors of the church stood open and all were invited to stop in for half an hour of prayer from 12:15 to 12:45 p.m. In nice weather

we may even set up some chairs under the tree on the front lawn.

It is hoped that staff, members, and neighbors passing by will find their way into the Circle for a time of prayer in community. The format is simple – perhaps an easy song, a short bit of scripture, and plenty of time

for spoken and silent prayer as the Spirit moves within the group.

Please join us. If this is not possible, consider setting aside a moment for your own prayer at that hour on Wednesdays, joining the Circle in Spirit, and remembering the Circle as we pray together.

## Council Corner

The Congregation Council met May 15 and continued to examine the issue of Grace's deficit budget in light of our congregational call to mission and ministry. Following a study of the difference between *membership* and *discipleship*, the congregation enlarged and reexamined ideas from its previous meeting for increasing income and decreasing expenses. It was noted, for example, that increasing giving is a matter of faith; giving to keep up a building is important, whereas giving in gratitude to Christ in order to fulfill our call to nurture faith and serve others involves truly stepping out in faith. Installing a new boiler system not only saves money, but also reduces our ecological footprint and serves as a

model to our community for caring for God's creation.

In other business, the Council heard staff and committee reports; made further plans for the Healthy Congregations workshop in June; approved a recommendation from the Creation Care task force for the office to endeavor to reduce its use of paper by 5%; approved an expenditure of up to \$3,650 to install a new grease trap in the kitchen as well as a new freezer and small refrigerator for the use of the Friday evening gatherings; agreed to sponsor a Saturday work day to support the Thrivent - Habitat for Humanity build on Laurel Street (see accompanying article); and agreed to consult with an outside lawyer to determine the best way to

transfer ownership of the valuable art collection being donated to the congregation by Louisa Barton-Duguay.

Because of the length of the meeting, the Council again tabled a proposal for changes to the by-laws of Grace's constitution, as well as consideration of a Congregation Assistance Program offered by the CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. Also on the agenda for the next Council meeting will be the disposition of the check received for energy efficiency received in connection with the installation of the new boiler system. The next scheduled meeting of the Council is Saturday, June 11, at 9:00 a.m.

**Did you forget? If you were part of the weight loss Lenten discipline, be sure to report the weight you lost. Just put on sticky note and place in the envelope on the narthex bulletin board.**

## 'Thrivent Build' on Asylum Hill

**Thrivent Financial for Lutherans** is sponsoring a 'build' by Habitat for Humanity this year at 192 Laurel Street on Asylum Hill, just a few blocks from Grace. Upon the recommendation of the Outreach Committee, the Congregation Council approved Grace's support of the program. Participation will include up to fifteen volunteers on a Saturday sometime this summer or early fall, as well as contributions of snacks or lunches on that Saturday or other Saturdays. If there are not fifteen volunteers from our church, another possibility is to combine with another congregation.

Habitat for Humanity is a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing

organization building simple, decent, affordable housing in partnership with people in need. Nick and Melitza Lebron and their 3 children are the family who will be living in the house they are helping to build. They have very strong roots in the city and have been involved in many community organizations from coaching in the Saturday Hoopsters basketball program, umpiring baseball in the South End, and serving on the Board of Directors for the Prudence Crandall Domestic Violence Services. They are very excited to be building in Hartford and look forward to being homeowners in the city they love.

On a 'build' day, volunteers arrive at 7:30 for a mandatory

safety meeting at 7:45, and work ends at or before 3:30 p.m. Volunteers need to be age 16 and older. If age 16, they need to be accompanied by a parent or guardian. All skills are welcome. (The coordinator reports someone from one church who is 75+ was cutting vinyl siding last year. She was a librarian all her life, so if that tells us anything, it says that all are welcome and needed!) Volunteers should wear comfortable work clothes and bring water and lunch (unless our church provides one for our volunteers) and sunscreen.

Dates and details about Grace's participation are still being worked out, but if you know you would like to participate, please let the office know.

## Grace receives check for energy efficiency

A check for \$3,426.00 has been received from the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund (CEEF) in payment for the installation of energy efficient natural gas boilers. In his letter accompanying the check, Jeffrey Gaudiosi, Chairperson of the Fund, wrote: "[You have] made an important investment in energy savings. The financial

incentive provided by the CEEF helped you complete your project the right way, the first time. The energy-saving benefits will continue on, year after year. Not only will you save money, your participation contributes to the stability of Connecticut's electric grid and reduces negative impacts on the environment. Efficient use of

energy slows down the need to build more power plants and results in fewer harmful pollutants being released into our atmosphere. Saving electricity has the same impact as taking cars off the road by reducing carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions."

## Friday night community suppers continuing and expanding

Each Friday 6:00 P.M. at Grace since this past January 14<sup>th</sup>, members of Grace and people from all walks of life and backgrounds from around the Grace Lutheran parish enter the fellowship hall to participate in an evening of food, fellowship, singing and prayer. The numbers of people from the community continue to increase as word gets out.

Many from the community have begun to take responsibilities with different aspects of the program such as helping with publicity, cleaning up, being "Chef for the Night, welcoming and registration, helping with prayers, providing music, and leading with discussions.

Each Friday there is a "Head Chef" who designs the meal and leads in the preparation with others helping. The Head Chefs so far are: Nancy Urban, Wannita Wiggins, the Thompson Family, Adrian Rodriguez, and Louisa Barton-Duguay.

Many from the community have helped to provide music. Once such group is Agape, a singing duo that has produced a recording and will be providing music again this next Friday May 20<sup>th</sup>. Beyond that, Agape is organizing a music festival in partnership with Grace that will involve many other singing and

recording groups from around New England next fall.

Through buying very frugally and with the help of participants acting as "Head Chefs" and helping in other ways the costs for the meal have been kept within a projected annual cost of \$2,000. The Friday Night Supper Committee has successfully applied with Jody Rodiger's help, to be a partner with Hartford Food Share. When this process is complete, Grace will be able to obtain food for this purpose for just a few dollars per year.

When a call went out recently to the congregation to replenish our food supply for the food pantry at West Middle School, people from the community who attend the suppers got in gear under the leadership of Wannita Wiggins and brought in an overwhelming supply of food. People from the community helping people. This is one of the goals of the suppers in building community. Recently one of the participants, Albert Bell who is often referred to as "Rev" because of his training and his political and spiritual leadership in the Hartford community noted that "the presence of Christ can be felt here -- there is no animosity here"

Many of the people who come to Friday night suppers also

participated in the Easter Sunday breakfast. We thank the Brown family for all they do and especially for the extra mile on Easter Sunday. There were more than eggs scrambling when many people from the community lined up at the door before 8:00 a.m. on Easter Sunday. Some of these people have also participated in Sunday worship. We are grateful to members of the congregation who have attended on Friday nights and have helped to offer Grace Hospitality by building relationships. We hope various people will continue to do that. And also when our visitors show up for worship, to sit with them and help orient them to the use of the bulletin, liturgy and hymns. Many have difficulty with this and need help.

We thank all who are helping. Members of the committee are: Nancy Urban, Wannita Wiggins, Jackie Meyers, Dave Pierce, Chad Thompson, Louisa Barton Duguay, and Pastor Eva Steege, member ex officio. Thanks to Ruth Rempt for acting as Grace's Certified Food Specialist. Thanks also to Tony Defeo who bakes wonderful bread often for the suppers as well as for Eucharist at our Sunday worship.

*Darrell Urban, Chair*

## Note from our Artist in Residence for Outreach

On May 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> I attended a meeting of the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness (CCEH) in Meriden. Over 200 people attended.

I learned that in Connecticut shelter bed usage exceeded 100% during all of 2010 and much of 2009. The numbers continue to increase but accurate statistics are not available. These numbers do not account for people turned away or those who do not seek shelter. Some estimate that for every one counted there are another three people doubled up with a friend or relative. *Doubled up* means they are not on the lease and persons providing shelter are putting their tenancy at risk. In 2010 the number of people seeking shelter for the first time increased dramatically. In Connecticut the total number of homeless registering in the system was 11,700. The majority were white but there were disproportionately large numbers of Blacks and Hispanics.

Shelters and transitional housing are funded by a federal program called HEARTH - Homeless Emergency and Rapid Transition to Housing. Street outreach is primarily done by DMHAS - Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. Transitional housing is funded through HUD - Housing and Urban Development. With all the issues affecting community life in Hartford, dealing with housing first is the strategy that is working best. It is believed that if you can get people into stable housing, then their other problems can be best addressed.

The biggest take-away for our church? People who do not have stable housing do not join churches.

Here are some statistics to consider when thinking about our neighborhoods of Asylum Hill, Clay Arsenal, and Upper Albany. There are approximately 3,000 single-parent households. The unemployment rate is 42 -

56%. The numbers living in poverty are 40 - 60%. College graduates are between 3% and 17%, with high school graduates between 45% - 68%. The Clay Arsenal area has the lowest education level and the lowest median income. It also has the smallest white population with only 0.7%.\*

As a church in Asylum Hill and within a mile and a half of these other areas, what is our responsibility in outreach? All of the government agencies are reaching out to the faith community as partners in their programs. I will be doing more research into this area to see if there is a role for Grace to play.

*Louisa Barton-Duguay*

\*Statistics found at [http://www.hartfordinfo.org/Snapshots/neighborhood\\_data.asp?pRegion=Zonas%20NRZ%20de%20Hartford](http://www.hartfordinfo.org/Snapshots/neighborhood_data.asp?pRegion=Zonas%20NRZ%20de%20Hartford)

## Time to sign up

**\*\*The flowers** that adorn our church on Sunday mornings may be donated in honor of loved ones, or in memory of saints who have gone before us, who were special in our lives. The sign-up sheet is in the narthex, and the cost is \$30 for two bouquets.

**\*\* 'Second Hour'** hospitality is important to our fellowship at Grace. Sign up downstairs to provide light refreshments. Instructions are posted – the idea is to keep it simple and friendly.

## Creation Care

The pastures of the wilderness overflow, the hills gird themselves with joy, the meadows clothe themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves with grain, they shout and sing together for joy. Psalm 65:12-13

We have been working on our “Carbon Footprint”. What about our “Foodprint”? Do you ever stop and wonder: What’s the story of my food? Where did it come from, and how did it get to me? What is the connection between what I eat and my faith? Food connects us to some of the most important questions of our time. The food choices we make—individually and as a society—create a ripple that is felt around the world.

*Learn more at the COOL HARVEST second hour on June 12!*

- Watch a film, “Nourish” as seen on PBS
- Taste an array of “Cool Harvest” foods
- Receive ideas and resources for “cool living”
- You can vote with your fork to reduce global warming
- Free items to help you be a “cool” shopper.



Do you have a special item that is grain based, locally produced or organic that you would like to share for the “tasting party”? Let Nancy Urban know by calling 860-416-3336.

## Liturgy - it’s your work!

Did you know that “liturgy” means “work of the people?”

With this in mind, the Worship Committee invites worshipers at Grace to send in the name(s) of your favorite hymns, and the Committee will make every effort to schedule them in as they plan worship during the summer months. If it works out well, the invitation will continue right through the fall.

The hymn can come from Evangelical Lutheran Worship, This Far by Faith, With One Voice, or any other commonly used hymnal. We’ll find it!

Just send an e-mail to [officeatgrace@sbcglobal.net](mailto:officeatgrace@sbcglobal.net), or call 860-527-7792, or fill out the simple form below and mail it in. If you wish, let us know why the hymn is special to you. We’ll try to let you know when your hymn is scheduled.

\*\*\*\*\*

To: Worship Committee

Please schedule my favorite hymn:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Optional) I especially like this hymn because

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Pretty please, print clearly)

## GodSong presents season's final performance

GodSong, an ecumenical auditioned choir dedicated to the performance of great sacred choral works in the context of Christian worship, is prepared for its final performance of the GODSONG 2010-2011 Season. Chosen to celebrate Ascension Day, music for choir and orchestra will feature:

J.S. Bach, Cantata 11

Ralph Vaughan Williams, O Clap Your Hands

Orlando Gibbons, O Clap Your Hands

J.S. Bach, Brandenburg Concerto #4

Sunday, June 5 at 7:30pm, at Emanuel Lutheran Church, 311 Capital Ave, Hartford.

Admission is free. Visit [www.godsongct.org](http://www.godsongct.org) or e-mail [jdrs@aya.yale.edu](mailto:jdrs@aya.yale.edu) for more information.

## U.S. Severe Spring Storms

An outbreak of severe spring storms has wreaked havoc across the southern United States. ELCA Disaster Response is already at work with local Lutheran congregations and the Southeastern Synod staff to assess what is needed. Only one ELCA congregation is reported to have severe damage from a tornado. Please keep in your prayers Pastor Sandy Niiler and the people of Christ Lutheran in Cullman, Alabama.

This is one of several severe storms this spring.

Communities across the Midwest have been fighting back flood waters. A dam in

southeastern Missouri was overwhelmed earlier last month, flooding more than 100 homes. In recent weeks, tornadoes were responsible for widespread damage in Missouri and the Carolinas.

The ELCA stands ready to respond in all areas affected. Our congregations are experts at serving in their communities – when and where it is needed most. Our first and best response to all disasters is prayer. Please pray for all those affected by these terrible storms.

Contributions can be made to ELCA Disaster Response

designated for “U.S. Severe Storms.” **All designated gifts will be used entirely (100 percent) in response to these disasters.** These gifts will help families whose lives and livelihoods have been disrupted by these natural disasters.

Check or money orders may be made to Grace Lutheran Church. Write “**U.S. Severe Storms - ELCA**” on your check's memo line. Or you can give by phone at 800-638-3522 or online at [www.elca.org/springstorms](http://www.elca.org/springstorms). Thank you for your gifts and prayers!

*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.*

## People of Grace

A HUGE THANK YOU to **Gayle Brown and family**, and **Doug Kraus** for providing us with an outstanding breakfast on Easter morning! They served an overflow and very happy crowd. This year's Easter Breakfast was served in honor of **Frank Brown**, who masterminded the breakfast for over thirty years. Once again this year, the Grace community was wonderfully blessed.

Thank you to **Tony DeFeo** provided his home-baked fresh bread for worship on Palm Sunday and on Easter. It helped make it one of the finest - and best-attended - Easter celebrations in a long time. Thanks also to **Darrell Urban** and to **Dale Eberhardt**, who recruited and led a band and a choral



*Adrian Rodriguez is one of the 'head chefs' at the Friday supper gatherings.*

group, respectively, that added greatly to the beauty and joyous spirit of the service.



Welcome to our new members! **Marisol Santana** was received into membership at Grace on Easter Sunday, April 24<sup>th</sup>. That was just the beginning! Five additional members were received that morning through the sacrament of Holy Baptism: Marisol's fiancé, **Paul Boodhoo**, her son, **Justin Ray Santana**, Marisol and Paul's twin daughters, **Madison Mia Santana** and **Maya Tia Santana**, and her nephew, **Maribel Santana's** son, **Eric Jacob Crawford**. Got all that? **Guenther and Edith Mamet** were Marisol and Paul's sponsors, Marisol was Eric's sponsor, and Maribel was sponsor for Justin, Madison and Mia.



Congratulations to our graduates! **Maribel Santana**, was awarded her Master of Business Administration degree on May 15<sup>th</sup>. **Sally Nolen** received her Bachelor of Science degree on May 7<sup>th</sup> from UCONN.

Parish Administrator **Cathy and Henry Tomlinson** welcomed their newest granddaughter on April 11, **Shayla Rose Tomlinson**.

Foodshare has selected **Jody Wynn Rodiger** as a spotlight volunteer in their recent newsletter. (See article on page 11) Jody took the original initiative to help Grace's Friday gathering program become a Foodshare Partner. Not only that, word is that her pumpkin bread won 3rd prize at the Manchester Hospital Health Fair!

## In the Spotlight...

*(Reprinted from the FoodShare e-newsletter)*

**Jody Wynn Rodiger** has been volunteering with Foodshare in some respect for nearly ten years now. It all began back in 2002 when she was invited to participate on a Walk team. "It was such a wonderful experience that I started looking into more ways I could help the mission."

Later that year, after years of dropping off a turkey and \$20 she helped collect donations and enjoyed speaking with Foodshare employees about the importance of their work. So Jody moved on to other opportunities, working as a host for the Empty Bowls Project at Manchester Community College. "One year I [even] helped out chef Kent by driving all over greater Hartford picking up soups in my little Honda Civic."

Trained as a Hunger 101 representative, Jody participated in several church events to educate the

community along with taking several groups to the Foodshare facility for a tour. Kids soon to be confirmed at the church, along with their parents, took part and gained a new appreciation for all that they had. "There is a component of community, education and sharing in all the volunteer opportunities. I encourage everyone to try one or just participate in discussions. The Foodshare staff are just an awesome bunch of people to work with and Gloria has done an outstanding job of finding new ways to help people."

About six years ago she began meeting with legislators to let them know of the work she was doing along with the needs of the community and how they could help. Legislation development started and relationships were built. She attended free workshops offered by "Keep the Promise" teaching her how to deliver testimony in support of legislation. So

when Foodshare's Community Involvement Manager sent out an email sharing new legislation from the USDA to tackle hunger and child nutrition she jumped in to show her support. "Hunger and nutrient issues for low income families have had a tug on my heart since my mom worked for WIC when I was a teen and shared stories with me of the human condition. Advocacy work is an important way to be represented as a voter and voice the concerns of the underserved in our communities. No person should go hungry and malnourished in our land of abundance."

Thanks Jody for your continuous support of our work!

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a Foodshare advocate, please contact Sarah Santora at 860-286-9999 x105.

## U.S. Torture Program Has Not Been Vindicated

(Washington, D.C.) Rev. Richard Killmer, Executive Director of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture released the following statement reiterating that despite claims to the contrary, the U.S. torture program has not been vindicated by the death of Osama Bin Laden:

“The architects of the United States torture policies will stop at nothing in their attempt to defend the indefensible. Torture is always wrong and immoral. Torture has not been vindicated; it is a stain on

America’s promise and cost us the good will of many who could have helped us locate bin Laden years earlier.

“The world community recognizes that torture is always morally wrong and illegal; the United States has agreed. Torture debases the persons tortured, as well as the torturers, and it violates the basic tenets of all major religions.

“The claims made by the proponents of the torture program prove the compelling

need for the establishment of a government-sponsored Commission of Inquiry with full subpoena power to let the public know the full extent and consequences of the torture program. Nothing is more important for the soul of America at this time than an unrestricted and comprehensive review of the U.S. torture program.”

The ELCA is a member of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture.

## Message on the death of Osama bin Laden

*Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson*

May 2, 2011

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

The death of Osama bin Laden is an occasion for solemn remembrance. We remember the lives of all whose deaths resulted from his choosing hatred and violence. We stand with those who continue to mourn the death of loved ones while giving thanks for their lives, their love and their faith. We also continue to hold in prayer all whose service in the military, in government and in humanitarian and peacemaking activities contribute to a safer and more prosperous world.

At the same time we also recall who we are: people baptized into Christ, freed to serve our neighbors. We are people called as Christ’s ambassadors of reconciliation with our neighbors, serving God’s work of restoring community. We engage our neighbors of other faiths, including our Muslim neighbors near and far, in respectful, searching dialogue and shared commitment to build a world that reflects God’s will for peace with justice. We pray for our neighbors, even those who are our enemies.

Most of all, in these 50 days of celebrating Christ’s resurrection, joy finds its fullest and deepest expression not over a human death but in God’s promise to unite all things in heaven and on earth, to reconcile the human family and to bring God’s reign of peace. Confident in what God has promised, we witness our resolve against any act of violence in the name of religion and our renewed commitment of service to the neighbors and world God so deeply loves.

In God’s grace,

The Rev. Mark S. Hanson  
Presiding Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



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Louisa Barton-Duguay, Artist in Residence

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

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

*The submission deadline for the July 2011 edition of Grace Notes is June 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)

