



GRACE NOTES

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

March

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Boiler system approved, work begins

At a special congregational meeting Sunday, January 30, the congregation voted unanimously to approve the proposal of AAA Plumbing to install a new high efficiency heating and hot water system as soon as possible at a cost of no more than \$40,000.00.

On Saturday morning, January 22, it was discovered that the present boiler had stopped working. Viking Oil was called, and they discovered that the side panel had blown off and two gaskets had disintegrated. Soot was everywhere and toxic fumes were leaking from the boiler room into the rest of the building. The Viking Oil service person was called in, who said that the boiler must be replaced as soon as possible.

It was clear that an Emergency Team needed to be assembled immediately. As it

happened, three members of the Property Committee were already present: **Dale Eberhardt, Guenther Mamet, and Ted Steege.**



*The final day of our late lamented boiler.
Photo by Dale Eberhardt*

(Property Chairperson **Barbara Ruhe** was unable to be present, but was consulted by phone.) Also in the building were **Darrell and Nancy Urban.** This group of five agreed to work together to develop an emergency plan, to be submitted to a hastily called meeting of the congregation's Executive Committee.

The Emergency Team began by addressing the question, "What is the least we can do to assure that we have heat in the building for worship tomorrow and prevent the pipes from freezing?" A second concern was to minimize the amount spent on a temporary fix, since the congregation was already considering a major high-efficiency renewal of the heating and hot water system to save energy costs and reduce the harm we are doing to the environment.

The Emergency Team contacted Blake Mechanic, who said they could do nothing in the next day or two, but suggested we call Hartford Boiler, whom they would normally subcontract to do such emergency work. Hartford Boiler also said they would be unable to make a repair or replacement in two days. There was a possibility of renting a temporary

(con't on page 2)

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Boiler system approved, work begins *(con't.)*

boiler, but Hartford Boiler surmised that this option would take as long and cost as much as replacing the boiler; it would increase costs to no advantage.

The team's immediate concern, besides having heat for Sunday worship the next day, was avoiding the threat of frozen pipes. They called Dan Allen of AAA Plumbing, who inspected the boiler and concluded that the explosion and shutdown had resulted from an accumulation of soot resulting from highly inefficient combustion. He offered to do an extensive cleaning job, install temporary gaskets, replace the side panel, and fire up the boiler. That might answer both concerns for the next two days, but nothing would guarantee that the result would last any greater length of time. The Emergency Team authorized him to proceed, at an estimated cost of \$500.00 plus any needed parts.

Mr. Allen also said that he could install a replacement boiler within a few days if the congregation approved the proposal he submitted last September, rather than

spending money on an aging oil system. The remainder of the project could be completed in approximately 30 days. After considerable discussion of all the alternatives, the Emergency Team unanimously recommended to the Executive Committee that they (1) approve the immediate cleaning proposal by AAA Plumbing and (2) call an emergency meeting of the Congregation to consider approval of the original AAA Plumbing proposal for a new high-efficiency heating and hot water system, to be fired initially by propane gas and converted to natural gas as soon as Connecticut Natural Gas is able to install a gas line (probably after the spring thaw).

Shortly after the Emergency Team agreed on these recommendations, The rest of the Executive Committee arrived: **President Emma Coleman Carr, Vice President Maribel Santana, and Secretary Bruce Klotz.** (Treasurer Dale Eberhardt was already present as part of the Emergency Team.) Following a report and discussion of the morning's

events, the Executive Committee approved both recommendations, setting the date of the emergency meeting of the Congregation for Sunday, January 30.

It was noted that proposals had been requested from three highly recommended contractors. AAA Plumbing had submitted a comprehensive proposal meeting all the objectives; a second contractor had submitted a partial proposal, but not one for a system customized for the whole building; and a third contractor had declined to bid. It was also noted with gratitude that Grace had received a low-interest loan from Bernie Biederman for \$16,000 plus an additional \$4,000 to complete his 5-year Build Us Up Lord pledge, and that he had promised a second loan for the same amount would be available in February of 2011, so there would be cash on hand to fund this project. The Executive Committee therefore voted, upon the recommendation of the Emergency Team, to call the Emergency Congregational Meeting.

A contract was signed that afternoon, and work began the next day.

*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.*

Note from Pastor

“One-on-one”

“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the Resurrection and the Life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live.’” John 11:25

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Get ready. Get comfortable. During this “Year of Matthew” we are going to abandon the “First Gospel” (which is really the second or third) during the season of Lent, and spend some time in the Fourth Gospel, the Gospel of John. The passages we will read are long! Very long! So sit back and relax and join in some remarkable conversations.

All the passages report conversations Jesus had with individuals – the tax collector and the woman at the well, for example, and the man blind from birth, and Martha, Lazarus’s sister. In each case the conversations were very private, Jesus listening closely to the concerns of each person, and each person listening carefully to what Jesus had to say to them. The result in every case was that ones who heard Jesus were galvanized by what they heard. The news they heard was personal and powerful, so much so that it immediately radiated out to everyone around them.

One-on-one conversations like this are used these days as a

powerful tool. It is a basic method, for example, in community organizing for learning about issues and then uniting people around them. Our Visioning Steering Group has been devoted to careful one-on-one listening to one another, both within the congregation and in the Asylum Hill community. They call it Holy Listening.

A special technique called “Reflective Listening” involves listening carefully to another person and then repeating back exactly what was heard, until the speaker is satisfied that the listener has heard and understood absolutely everything, including the emotions under the narrative. The listener has to put aside his own agenda and focus fully on the speaker. It’s not easy to do, but the spiritual rewards for the *listener* are tremendous.

Learning to listen better, and encouraging the congregation to listen, has been a personal project since I came to Grace. In fact last fall I was invited to be a member of the Synod’s Listening Team, a group of clergy who will go out in pairs

and listen in congregations where there seems to be trouble. It is an honor and it is very humbling.

As a next step in this learning process, my Lenten discipline this year will be to visit every member household at Grace. I would like to hear what you like about Grace, what your hopes and concerns are, and how you think you can participate in the future ministry of this congregation. If you prefer a day or time that would be especially convenient for such a visit, please give me a call.

This means I will not be attending a lot of meetings, either at church or in the community during March and April, and I won’t be at my desk much. But now you know where I’ll be. *I* know it’s going to be a fantastic blessing!

I also know the Lord listens and hears and knows all that is in your soul. May you hear in your soul his words of comfort and grace every day.

Pastor Steege

Mark Your Calendar:

Celebrate First Year of “Build Us Up, Lord” Come to Grace Potluck March 20!

By Dale Eberhardt and Ted Steege

Just one year since the beginning of our “Build Us Up, Lord” building fund campaign, we have plenty to celebrate and lots to look forward to. Come join us for a First Anniversary potluck after worship on Sunday, March 20.



Think of it:

- Our fully refurbished, lifts high the cross in ongoing witness that God’s mission is alive here.
- Our parking lot, repaved in an environment-friendly way, offers safe and attractive access to members and newcomers.
- The new stone steps to the main door offer steady footing to all who come to worship and depart to serve.
- We now have a new, clean-burning, highly efficient gas-fired heating and hot water system that is expected to reduce our carbon footprint by 25-50 per cent, while providing more even and reliable heat for church and community activities.

All these improvements are answers to prayer, as God is indeed building us up for an ongoing strong presence in the community. Pledges to date total 91 per cent of the campaign’s basic \$150,000 goal, and other gifts put anticipated income above 106 per cent. That gives us a start toward renewal of our beautiful pipe organ as we move toward our “venture goal” of \$290,000.

This financial accounting is only a part of the campaign. We have a vision of an active vital church reaching out in faith to the surrounding community, as illustrated in the enthusiastic response to our Friday community suppers.

God is with us, building us up. We have work to do. God’s work, Our hands. The building is a place to gather in praise and thanksgiving to renew our strength for God’s work in the world.

Come to celebrate the work already accomplished.

Come to anticipate the tasks remaining.

Come to enjoy food and fellowship in God’s house with God’s people.

Congregation approves deficit budget

The congregation held its Annual Meeting for the Budget on Sunday, February 13, and approved the budget proposed by the Finance Committee and endorsed by the Congregation Council.

In his written report, outgoing Finance Committee chairman **Chet Brodnicki** said, "It was a challenge to keep expenses in line with budgeted line items. We ended the year with a deficit of \$28, 955.40. This is better than the approved budget deficit of \$43,631.00. The deficit also takes into account a total of \$58,788.96 that was expended for Capital improvements and receipts of \$51,065.62 from Campaign Funds. It is important that we all

understand that when we end the year in a deficit position it means that we have withdrawn from our savings/ investments to cover that deficit."

After hearing the reports of last year's financial results and reviewing the new budget proposal, presented by **Barbara Calogero**, the congregation approved the proposed budget that showed an anticipated income of \$148,600.00 and expenses of \$184,553.00.

The congregation expressed thanks to the outgoing financial officers: Treasurer **Gertrude Kanwischer**, Assistant Treasurer **Barbara Calogero**, and Finance Chairman **Chet Brodnicki**

(who was unable to attend the meeting), for their many years of faithful service.

In other business, the congregation elected **Jody Wynn Rodiger** and **Vera Yigle-Kaljob** as members of the New England Synod Assembly, meeting in early June. They also elected **Barbara Ruhe** and **Mildred Unfried** to the Nominating Committee for 2011.

Congregation President **Emma Coleman Carr** noted that the Council has committed agenda time at its next meeting to discuss plans for bringing the budget into balance and making appropriate use of our endowment funds.

A day with Martin Marty set for March 17 in Vernon, CT

A forum, "A Day with Martin Marty," is scheduled for Thursday, March 17, from 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. at Trinity Lutheran Church, 20 Meadowlark Rd., Vernon, Conn. The cost for the event, including morning coffee and a light lunch, is \$30. Topics include the current situation

in the Christian church and what it means to be a confessing Lutheran today. For more information, visit the blog of the New England Lutheran Theological Forum at <http://nelutherantheoforum.wordpress.com/>.

You can access the brochure directly on the synod website at http://www.nesynod.org/component/docman/doc_download/155-martin-marty-event.

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.

Check out the Women's Bible Study

After a brief hiatus due to terrible weather and the lack of parking space, the Women's Bible study will resume on March 8 at the home of **Emma Coleman Carr**, 19 B Woodland Avenue Bloomfield CT 06002.

The group gathers at 7 p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month.

New participants are always welcome.

During the days of Lent, plans are to follow and discuss a *40-day Journey with Maya Angelou*.

After Easter other topics are under consideration, including a study of some of the lesser-known women

whose brief and tantalizing stories are found in both the Old and New Testaments.

For directions to Emma's house, call her at 860-243-5201. If you'd like a ride, call Pastor Steege at church, 860-527-7792.

Spend a weekend at Philadelphia Seminary April 1-3

Do you have a passion for service and a love for the gospel? Are you interested in meeting others who are exploring their call? The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (LTSP), PA., the seminary supported by the New

England Synod, invites you to its "Philadelphia Visit" April 1-3, a weekend to explore God's call in your life and experience the campus community. Housing and meals are provided. Assistance with transportation is available. Individual day visits

also may be arranged for prospective students who are interested in sitting in on classes, visiting with students, faculty and staff, and experiencing a day in the life of the seminary. For more information or to register go to <http://ltsp.edu/called>.

Grace Academy

Grace Academy, a tuition-free, private, faith-based, highly successful girls middle school located at 277 Main St. is accepting applications for girls entering 5th Grade for the 2011-2012 school year. Admission in Grades 6 & 7 is

on a space-available basis. It is our mission to develop the kinds of personal and educational support that will ensure your daughter's continuing success in high school and college. Contact

the school office at 860-263-7535 for application information or visit our website at www.GraceAcademyHartford.org. Grace Academy - a Star of Hope in Hartford!

Report from Artist in Residence

With days reaching 50 degrees spring fever can set in fast. I have been out on the streets inviting people to our Friday evening gatherings and more people are coming. Peter Spungin is cooking one meal a month and, if nothing else, that should get people coming back, his food is so good. The musical duo, Agape was fabulous and we do have a CD that may be playing some Sundays during Second Hour. I have heard rumours that they may come for a Sunday service.

I would recommend that everyone come to at least one Friday gathering. They are a great way to get to know members of the congregation and members of the community. The first Friday in March, Tony DeFeo, our wonderful bread maker will be making pancakes as we

prepare for Shrove Tuesday and the beginning of Lent.

Our prayer sessions on Friday evenings have interspersed concerns expressed by various people in attendance with the singing by the whole group of

*Lord listen to Your children
praying,
Lord send Your Spirit in this
place
Lord listen to Your children
praying
Send us love, send us power,
send us grace!*

The snowflakes are down and the Fellowship Hall has been brightened up to welcome the spring. The Property Committee has received and is excited about my proposal to refurbish the stage curtain. The plan is to spray paint the fabric as a background for fabric appliqué. I have done a mock up of the design but it

could be subject to more changes. I am currently working with the song line "Black and yellow, red and white, We're all precious in his sight". This has led me to designing textured tree trunks and branches in each of the colors and fabricating leaves out of ethnic pieces of cloth in a harmonious way.

I am hoping to start having a gathering on Wednesdays soon from 11am to 2pm. We will be having fun exercises (my favorite being laughter yoga) followed by a lunch of soup and bread and that followed by an art project which could include the stage curtain, or individual painting/appliqué/mixed media projects. If anyone has any materials to donate or would like to help please contact me.

Many blessings to everyone,

Louisa

Music Recitals at Grace

Doctoral candidate Anne Berry, of the Hartt School of Music, University of Hartford, will bring several of her cello students to perform in a recital at Grace at 4 p.m.

Sunday, March 13th. Then just two weeks later, at 5 p.m. Sunday, March 27, Hartt student Noriyo will present a flute recital.

Don't miss these! Come and welcome these promising young artists to Grace and be prepared to hear exquisite music, enhanced by Grace's outstanding acoustics.

Spring Forward!

Daylight Savings Time begins at 2:00 a.m. on the Second Sunday in March. This year

that would be March 13. Set your clocks ahead the night

before and go to bed a little early!

Creation Care



Sunday, March 6th Taking the Next Step: A Lenten Journey

Come together for a special worship service and second hour that helps to prepare us for a Lenten Journey in caring for God's creation. The choices we make concerning the energy we use, the foods

that we eat, the pollution we create affect not only our individual lives, but the lives of people around the world. As we work together to reduce the carbon footprint of Grace Congregation, we are

also challenged and encouraged to reduce our own carbon footprint at home and at work. Come, share your ideas, lend your support and get ready to take THE NEXT STEP!

Take the Challenge! Lose some Weight! Feel Better! Be Healthy!

We know that one of the biggest health problems in our nation is people being overweight and some members of Grace also struggle with this whether it be 10 pounds, 20 pounds or more. As part of a Lenten Journey, a member of Grace has offered to donate \$5 for every pound lost between March 9 (that's Ash Wednesday) and April 24

(Easter Sunday). This is a group process – no public weigh ins. No names listed. Want to participate? Weigh yourself on March 9th, record this number and either call it in to 860 416-3336 or put it on a sticky note in the basket on the narthex bulletin board. Then we will do the same at Easter. This way we will have

a total of our corporate weight at the beginning and again at the end and we can see how well we have done. Don't need to lose weight? You can support others through prayer, being a walking or exercise partner or by not putting temptation (those delicious baked goodies) in front of them.



What do these two little girls have to do with our carbon footprint?

Find out on March 6th!

Congregational Covenant

The Care of Creation Team invites members of Grace to make a commitment to a life of caring for creation. Let this vision of a covenant guide your stewardship, discipleship and choices of care for creation.

As a member of this congregation I dedicate myself to the care and redemption of all that God has made. I agree, within this building and community and on my own, in partnership with others at Grace Lutheran Church, to the following acts of respect out of my kinship with all creation. (Please check all the specific ways you intend to fulfill this covenant.)

Recycle:

- Aluminum Cans
- Glass
- Plastic
- Paper Products

Reuse:

- Avoid use of paper and plastic bags-by using canvas or cloth bags
- Using ceramic or travel mugs instead of paper or styrofoam
- Use the reverse side of paper for memos and notes

Conserve Energy:

- Keep the temperature down
- Turn off lights and other electrical items when not in use

Conserve Water

- Turn off water when not using sink or shower
- Limit use of water on lawn and car-washing

Consume Resources Wisely:

- Eat intentionally and locally, lower on the food chain
- Simplify lifestyle and purchasing habits

Transportation:

- Use alternative means of transportation

Commune with Nature:

- Spend more time intentionally outside

Political Advocacy

- Stay aware and active in legislative efforts to protect the environment

AIDS Awareness Day

“The Body of Christ has AIDS” – prayerful words of Bishop Mark Hanson

Thank you to the Grace members who stayed for the 2nd Hour community speaker February 6, and thank you to Janier Caban-Hernandez, Director of AIDS Legal Network for CT, who engaged us in dialog as we participated in honest conversation about the risks and realities of AIDS / HIV.

The following day was AIDS Awareness Day, an event described by Cecilia Lewis from CARC - Connecticut AIDS Resources Coalition. Her article sums it all up for our community.

Zeppo House hosted The African American Caribbean

Care Team’s third annual National Black AIDS Awareness Day event on February 7. Supporters took to the streets in a silent candlelight vigil walk to raise awareness of the need to encourage people to get tested.

Many in the Black community are unaware of the impact of HIV/AIDS on their community. Blacks made up 12% of the US population in 2006 but accounted for: 1) 45% of new HIV infections; 2) 46% of people living with HIV (PLWH); 3) 57% of HIV deaths (2007), and 4) 48% of

new AIDS diagnoses (2008). The survival time after an AIDS diagnosis is lower for Blacks than for most racial/ethnic groups.

Dr. Brad Howard, Jr. gave a reflective speech on his work with PLWHA as a pastor at a local church and as a community provider at Charter Oak Health Center. He stressed the importance of people being treated with dignity as we press to bring awareness to communities of color.

*Jody Wynn Rodiger -
Visioning Steering Group*



Have you seen the recycle bins? If you see Gracie Green, that’s me on the wastebasket. It is not for garbage! This is for recycling - paper, cardboard, clean cans, and bottles, and clean plastic containers. (Check the list in the kitchen or the forum room.) Too bad: I am not for soiled paper towels or napkins. Help Grace reduce our garbage by using the recycle bins in the proper manner. Thank you!



It snowed a lot this winter! This is the pile of snow moved from our parking lot into the playground, thanks to the generosity of our neighbor, Henry Zachs. Photo by Dale Eberhardt

Planning to pay for college? Thrivent can help!

Whether you're trying to fund a college education for your child, grandchild or even yourself, choosing the appropriate savings vehicle is one of the critical components to your success.

But how much money do you need to save, and which education savings plan is appropriate for your needs?

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans offers a free education funding calculator to help families estimate how much they need to save. Visit Thrivent.com and click on *Planning: Tools & Services*, then *Education Planning*, then determine which savings vehicle is suitable for you.

Here are some of the most popular college savings vehicles:

1. **529 savings plans**
2. **Coverdell Education Savings Accounts (ESAs)**
3. **UTMA/UGMA (Custodial Accounts)**

Each savings vehicle has its own unique advantages/disadvantages. A Thrivent Financial representative can help you choose the one that's right for you.

To learn more about paying/saving for college, contact your Thrivent Financial representative, Matthew Kellie, CLU, ChFC, Financial Associate, at (860) 646-2296 or matthew.kellie@thrivent.com today, or visit Thrivent.com.

Offered through a brokerage arrangement with Thrivent Investment Management Inc., Funds invested in 529 college savings plans have no bank guarantee, are not FDIC insured and may lose value.

You are advised to consider the investment objectives, risks, and charges and expenses associated with 529 college savings plans before investing. More information on 529 college savings plans is available in the issuer's official statement. Read the official statement carefully before investing.

You should investigate whether your state or your beneficiary's state offers a qualified tuition plan for its residents and consider what, if any, potential state income tax advantages or other benefits it offers. Please consult with a tax professional to receive tax analysis of the investments.

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Catherine Tomlinson, Parish Administrator
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Miriam Miller, Sexton

Mavis Smith, President
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Bruce Klotz, Secretary
Janice Potter, Financial Assistant
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PLEASE NOTE:

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

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