



GRACE NOTES

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

Potluck Brunch at Grace & Explore Art in Hartford's Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art - Sunday, October 11th

October
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Inside this issue:

The Parish Life and Education Committees are pleased to offer a potluck brunch and a private tour of Wadsworth Atheneum museum's Old Masters European paintings for the congregation. These events will serve as fellowship, education and fun for all ages, children and adults alike.

Brunch, Tour and Viewing of Art Schedule

- 11:00 am After Service. join us for a Potluck Brunch at Grace (make your favorite dish to share)
- 12:15 pm Carpool over to Wadsworth Atheneum (from church parking lot)
- 12:45 pm Private Tour of the Museum's Old Masters European Paintings - hosted by own very own parishioner, Sue Carey
- 1:30 - 5:00 pm Explore on Your Own Time at the Museum
Parents with children or Adults and Couples that want to explore on their own

During Explore on Your own time visit the museum's special exhibition *Rembrandt's People* as well as its permanent collections, including Hudson River School landscape paintings, Wallace Nutting furniture, American Art, French Impressionist paintings, Dalí, Picasso, and much more. There are family activities and at 2:30 pm docent-guided visit of Art in the Age of Rembrandt. Join us for one or both events. For the museum outing please RSVP to Phyllis Thompson at 413-827-9434 or thompswil5@gmail.com by October 7th.

About Wadsworth Atheneum:

Hours on Sundays: 10:00 am - 5:00 pm Parking: On the Street (meters are free and readily available nearby).

A special thanks to Sue Carey for offering free museum admission to our Grace family and their guests the afternoon of Sunday, October 11th. Don't miss this event!

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A Note from Pastor

"Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony" Colossians 3:14

At the foot of the cross

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In his pastoral remarks to the members of the ELCA Churchwide Assembly following their historic vote regarding ordination, Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson used scripture to address the concerns of both those who were deeply disappointed and those who were rejoicing. (A full report of the Assembly, as well as a column based on Bishop Hanson's remarks can be found in the September 2009 issue of *The Lutheran* magazine.) Finally, he used the words of Colossians 3:12-17 to address those concerned about the unity of the church following such difficult days.

It could turn out that the spirit of unity in Christ's love so fervently lifted up at the Assembly will be the hallmark of the event long after the decisions taken will have settled into their appropriate places in the history of our Church. It's easy to live in harmony when everyone agrees. It's not so easy when people of deep and well-informed faith and bound consciences come to conflicting conclusions.

Maybe such a historic moment can even serve as a model for congregations. Many faithful Christians (and non-

Christians) are upset and dismayed when they discover disagreements within congregations. Yet it stands to reason that people of faith who have individual concerns, perspectives, experience, and even ways of understanding Scripture are going to disagree on matters.

The good news is that we can learn from one another. The 'holy listening' process at the center of the work of our outreach visioning task group will not only produce guidance for us as we explore the future ministry of Grace. It is also a way for us to build loving relationships as brothers and sisters in Christ and in our neighborhood as we carefully hear one another's deepest concerns and most joyful witness.

This is what Grace is doing and has always done. How heartbreaking it is, then, to look at the secular world around us and watch as conversations about health care and other matters of public policy degenerate in an ever-increasing downward spiral of partisanship, mistrust, untruth, venom, and prejudice. Millions of our brothers and sisters are victims of corporate greed and mindless refusal to offer

adequate, affordable health care as a human right, while others avoid responsibility by calling each other names.

What can we do? We're just a little church! Well, there is plenty we can do. First, we can pray, and we can ask forgiveness for our part in a society that has come to such a place. We can inform ourselves; we can listen; we can engage in patient discourse; we can speak up, however gently, when we hear lies, especially hateful ones. We can write the letters and make the phone calls.

What can we do? We're just a little church. But... if not us, who else? In fact, we have a huge advantage! We are, after all, one in Christ. Here is how Bishop Hanson finished his remarks that day: "We finally meet one another not in our agreements or our disagreements, but at the foot of the cross, where God is faithful, where Christ is present with us, and where, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are one in Christ."

May the peace, love, and unity of Christ always be with you.

Pastor Steege

Flu shots available at Grace, Wednesday, October 14

Grace Lutheran Church will be the site of a flu clinic scheduled by VNA HealthCare on Wednesday, October 14, from 9:30 a.m. until 2 p.m.

The cost of the flu shot will be \$37.00 and \$57.00 for a pneumonia shot. (At this writing, VNA HealthCare is not providing H1N1 vaccinations. Please see related article.) Insurances accepted include:

Over 65: Aetna Managed Medicare, Medicare Advantage (HealthNet Smart

Choice), Anthem Managed Medicare, Connecticare Managed Medicare, WellCare and Medicare part B.

Under 65: Aetna, HealthNet, Connecticare, Anthem BC/BS, and Oxford.

If the cost of the shot is to be paid for by insurance, the insurance care must be presented to the nurse at the clinic prior to the shot being given. Cash and personal checks will also be accepted.

The flu shot won't make you sick; the virus will.

You can't get influenza (the flu) from the shot, according to information from VNA HealthCare. The flu shot is made from killed viruses, so it can't cause the flu. The most common side effect from the shot is mild soreness where the injection was given. This usually goes away within a day or two.

So go ahead, get vaccinated - this way you'll protect yourself, your loved ones, and those around you.

H1N1 Information

You should be aware of the novel H1N1 flu virus ("swine flu"), according to VNA HealthCare:

- It is a new strain and is different from the seasonal flu and requires a different vaccine.
- At this time, the H1N1 flu vaccine is not yet available to the public.
- With the potential spread of both seasonal

and novel H1N1 flu virus in schools and communities this year, it is more important than ever to continue to protect yourself and children from the seasonal flu.

- Be sure to get a seasonal flu vaccine as early as possible

(October 14 at Grace, for example), and to practice other flu prevention tips, such as washing hands frequently, disinfecting germ hot spots, coughing into your elbow and following good health guidelines.

*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.*

Ice Cream Social starts up Sunday School year

A special thank you to **Lou Oliver**, who helped with so many elements to make this year's Ice Cream Social a true success. Purchasing the ice cream, cones, toppings and other items to making the beautifully typed labels for the ice cream and being there to serve. What a blessing and we could not have pulled it off without Lou!

In addition we had such great help from **Anna-Lee and Catherine Thompson** - they set the tables on their own and they were so proud of it. A special thanks also to **Dwan**

Thompson for playing drums as well. Mom was impressed!

A special thanks as well to **Glenna Brodnicki, Anna-Marie Potter, Wendy Colbert, and Emma Coleman Carr** for pitching in to help with scooping ice cream and cleaning up. And **Chad Thompson** for the beautiful job with hanging the streamers! Thank you! Thank you! Nice teamwork - everyone.

Now that Sunday School is under way, I'm sure I will be calling on folks to help in the

coming months. We do need more teachers for January, February and March, and we could even use substitutes for 2-week intervals. I truly realize now how important Christian education really is.

Phyllis Thompson
Chairperson, Christian
Education Committee

*P.S. from Pastor - ...And above all a great big thank you to **Phyllis Thompson** for masterminding and leading such a memorable event!*

Concert for Justice

*October 4, 2009, 4:00 p.m.
United Methodist Church
Corner of Farmington and
South Whitney Street.*

Greater Hartford Interfaith Coalition for Equity and Justice (GHICEJ) is sponsoring a very exciting CONCERT FOR JUSTICE on October 4th at 4pm at the United Methodist Church on the corner of Whitney Street and Farmington Avenue. The purpose of the concert is to raise money for GHICEJ so that it can continue its justice work.

As you know, Grace Lutheran Church is a member of the

GHICEJ. Many of our members have been involved over the years in several of GHICEJ's advocacy and issue efforts: healthcare, more funding for affordable and quality early school education, urban anti-violence initiatives and, most recently tutoring and volunteering at Noah Webster and Rawson Schools, K-8 public schools in Hartford, and at the First Church of God in Christ, across the street from Noah Webster.

Anhared Stowe, Principal Second Violinist with the Hartford Symphony will

perform with pianist Pi-Hsun Shih. The concert will also include Klezmer music, folk music, gospel singing, a jazz ensemble and more and promises to be a very eclectic musical adventure!

A program booklet that includes ads will be the primary source of funds for this event. ICEJ is not charging for the concert, but will take a free will offering at intermission. Please come, have a great time, and support the work of ICEJ.

Closing Remarks to the Eleventh Churchwide Assembly - Excerpts

*Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson
Saturday, August 22, 2009*

Thank you for the way you have engaged one another in conversation. Thank you for the way that you have been consistently and faithfully attentive in prayer to the presence of the Spirit. Thank you that you have gathered consistently and faithfully each noon around the Means of Grace, to be nourished and fed by the Word of God that claims us, gathers us, frees us, and sends us....

I am committed to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America continuing to be a church body where people feel safe to teach, preach, lead, and serve in ways that they believe are consistent with the vows taken in ordination and the promises made in the affirmation of Baptism.

Please know that this needs to be a church safe for the rich theological conversation, biblical inquiry, and faith

expressions and explorations that have marked Lutherans for 500 years.

It will take time to put these actions into implementing form to bring to the Church Council. It also will take time to process our work. My prayer and my plea is that we take that time together, rather than separately....

I pray that the story we tell of this assembly is always the story of God's love for us in Christ Jesus, reconciling the whole world to God, giving us the ministry and the message of reconciliation. That Good News is too good to squander with internal conflicts that will drain our energies and diminish our capacity to bring that Good News to the world so that all might know Jesus.

I said months ago in an article in *The Lutheran* that I came into this assembly with confident hope, because the

word "confident" comes from the Latin *con fide*, "with faith." This is a hope born of faith in the risen Christ. A verse for me all summer has been 1 Peter 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

In that promise I have sought to faithfully lead you. The Churchwide Assembly has been a challenge – and it has been a joy. But more than anything, it has been a way to serve as we together serve our Lord. In that promise of hope, I take up the work that we all now share: to be attentive to one another, to be open to the Spirit, to be proclaiming the Good News of Christ, and to be serving our neighbor.

Parish Life Committee

The Parish Life Committee needs new member volunteers immediately.

This committee has been responsible for the planning

and coordinating of the social activities of the church for the year, which includes coffee hour each Sunday.

Interested members my call Rebecca Lewis at 860-688-0885, or Cathy Tomlinson at the church office at 860-688-0885.

In the end, each of us will choose.

I am going to try to do something daring. I want to give you a short history lesson, i.e., a history of some ideas. I had a History professor who once said in a snack bar on campus in one of those great after class discussions, that the political ideas of Western civilization fall between two opposite poles. One is the absolute ruthless rule of a strong monarch; the other, is the self-sacrifice of Jesus of Nazareth.

The first he said is best laid out in a seventeenth century work by Thomas Hobbes, an Englishman, entitled, *Leviathan*. Hobbes noted that people are only out for their own interests and are ruthless, deceptive and murderous in reaching their goals. People are essentially evil without any hope of redemption. They abuse and kill each other, they lie and swindle each other, and they disobey laws to get ahead of each other. Hobbes argued that the only effective way to bring order to such a society is the rule of an absolute monarch whose word is law and aim is law and order. In Hobbes' day, monarchs insisted that they ruled by divine right as God's chosen on earth. Of course, we have abandoned monarchs over the centuries, but modern history has produced its own law and order dictators who have ruled with terror and atrocities.

The other pole is that of Jesus of Nazareth. I guess the professor meant that for Jesus, the highest law was not that of a human dictator but was God's law. God's law, Jesus preached, resulted in love for one's neighbors, strangers and enemies. It led the widow to give all she had to God. Its highest form was dying for one's friends, but the daily obedience to the Commandments and to God's grace was most important. Jesus preached that the kingdom of God was at hand, and therefore, that God's love could change human behavior, something Hobbes would not have written. Most important, Jesus' death and resurrection meant that humans were saved from their sinful natures. Instead of building a law and order dictatorship, those who love God would be used by the Almighty to create His kingdom on earth.

This summer, I heard a lawyer make it very plain in a public place that she was entitled to the wealth that she had gathered. "Why should I be taxed to support health care for illegal aliens?" she yelled so everyone could hear her. Why is government picking on me? She really did not say this, but I knew she meant it. There was something more. A fellow lawyer agreed with her and said that the more government comes after their

money, the more they will illegally hide it through crooked manipulation of the tax laws. It was very clear that she felt entitled to her wealth because she believed that she alone had earned it. This person would have understood Hobbes' idea for government, the law and order dictatorship and would have agreed with it as long as long as the wealthy ruled.

The opposite is what I have been seeing here at Grace. The congregation is about to embark on a giving campaign over a five year period. I do not think leaders of the church want to impose anything on members of the church. Unlike Hobbes' dictatorship, our congregation is shepherded by the grace and revelation of God in all of our hearts. The pastor has written that we shall do a lot of praying as a group and as individuals. God would want it no other way. Jesus preached that the Kingdom of God is within each of us, and I sense that God wants to see each of us bring it out into the open with our own acts of stewardship. We are free to choose. This is exciting. Right here at Grace Lutheran, we shall demonstrate the power of God's rule through his grace and love for each of us. What an opposite idea of society to that of Thomas Hobbes and the two lawyers I heard at pool side.

Mark Jones

A good marriage requires falling in love many times...

Whether you've heard about Lutheran Marriage Encounter dozens of times before, or heard about it today for the first time, now is the time to decide to give yourselves the gift of a weekend that will show you how to not take your love for granted. It may even help you to fall in love all over again.

Lutheran Marriage Encounter believes:

- Good marriages can be great marriages
- Passion can continue through life's ups & downs
- A husband and wife can be best friends
- Strengthening a marriage enriches the family
- Good communication leads to renewed romance
- A lifetime of commitment can be filled with joy

**The next weekend is scheduled for
November 13-15, 2009 in Meriden, CT**

For more information or a registration brochure, visit our website at www.GodLovesMarriage.org or call Bob & Linda McGurn at (860) 653-2173.

To ensure a space, please register by October 23rd.

...with the same person

Women's Bible Study - Up and Running To God's Beloved: Paul's Letter to the Romans

The Women's Bible Study resumed on September 22, and continues to meet on the second and fourth Tuesdays at the home of **Emma Coleman Carr**.

This year we are looking at Paul's letter written to the church in Rome before he ever visited there. The course,

published by the magazine *Lutheran Woman Today*, was written by Sarah Henrich. She asks, "'Pouring out love more and more' sounds great, but what does it mean in day-by-day life?"

Pastor Steege and other members of the group are facilitating the study. All

women are welcome any time for study and fellowship. *Please come!* Emma's address is 19 B Woodland Avenue, Bloomfield CT 06002. Call her at 860-243-5201 if you need directions. If you'd like to carpool or just need a ride, call Pastor at the office, 860-527-7792.

Update: Hearing the Spirit's Call

On September 10, members of Grace met to continue the work of Holy Listening. We are preparing to hear the concerns of the community as part of the process of discerning God's call for us here, in this place. We are moved to strengthen our connections with the community and to find ways that will nourish our faith.

Holy Listening begins with listening to the Holy Word and to one another. With each other, we are beginning with:

What do you like about the community?

What concerns do you have about the community?

How do these concerns affect you personally?

We expect to discern God's call for us by seeing where our answers intersect with responses from the community.

One of Grace's blessings is the diversity of our members.

How do you answer these three questions? Please take a few moments after church or call any of us so that we can collect everyone's responses. Holy Listening begins with this important step and it helps assure that our vision is diverse and whole.

One outcome of the September meeting is that Grace needs to be represented at the monthly Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association. They meet at 6:15 pm at the Asylum Hill Congregational Church the first Monday of each month. By practicing Holy Listening at these meetings, we have the opportunity to grow new partners and be better informed about the community's concerns and the actions they are working towards. Could you fulfill this role for Grace? Please speak with Pastor or a member of the committee if you can take on this role.

Another outcome of the September meeting was a

decision to develop a packet for prospective and new members. What information do new members need? What should be included in a brief history of the church and of the community? If you would be willing to help write a portion of the packet, please see Gail Lindstrom.

The committee will meet regularly on the second Thursday each month at 6 pm and we welcome more input for this work. You don't need to join the committee or make a monthly meeting commitment. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 8. Please join us!

**Sue Carey and Gail Lindstrom, Co-Chairs,
Visioning Steering
Committee**

To respond to the Holy Listening questions, see Sue, Gail, Lou Oliver or Ted Steege.

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.



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Church Staff Directory

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(Emergency Phone 860-882-7715)
Dale Eberhardt, Organist
Catherine Tomlinson, Parish Administrator
Marilyn Flaherty, Financial Assistant
Onita Chambers, Parish Assistant
Miriam Miller, Sexton

Mavis Smith, President
Gail Lindstrom, Vice President
Bruce Klotz, Secretary
Gertrude Kanwischer, Treasurer
Barbara Calogero, Assistant Treasurer
Sally Nolen, Grace Notes Editor

PLEASE NOTE:

The submission deadline for the November 2009 edition of Grace Notes is October 15th. Please forward information to Sally Nolen (sallynolen@live.com) by this date. Thank you.

www.graceistheplace.org

