

# GraceFull Visions

JANUARY 2019

## New Worship Service Added

At the Special Congregational Meeting on December 9th, the congregation approved the proposal from the Congregation Council and the Steering Committee for the new worship service. The new service is designed to be “easier to get to, and easier to get through” for those with special needs and their families and/or caregivers. Thus, starting this month, our worship schedule will change to 8:45

am for the Adult Study, 9:45 am for the first service, and 11:15 am for our new service. The new service will also include a professionally-staffed nursery. Upgrades to the Fellowship Hall’s sound system and acoustic qualities will not only help those with hearing issues who come to the new service, they will also make the Fellowship Hall more usable for all of the congregational events

held in it. There will also be additional improvements made to the parking and signage around the property.

### Orientation Meeting

There will be an orientation meeting for the new Adaptive Service on Saturday, January 5th at 10:00 am in the Fellowship Hall. This is for anyone who would like to assist with the new service. (Remember, any current congrega-

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tion member is asked to maintain their attendance at the 9:45 am service even if they want to help with the new service.)

## Healthy Congregations Retreat Jan. 25 & 26

The goal of this retreat is to help congregations be as healthy as possible. The start of a new pastorate in a congregation’s journey is the ideal time for this retreat but it can be helpful at any time. Its intent is to give the pastor and congregation a chance to learn common communication skills (especially “Role Renegotiation”) and to provide the congregation with a “tool box” for developing and

maintaining healthy relationships.

The purpose of the Post-Call Retreat is to promote healthier, stronger, more mission-focused congregations in the Florida-Bahamas Synod.

The intended outcome for this retreat is that congregations will have the tools they need to improve communication and manage conflict.

The retreat is most scheduled 3 to 6 months after the arri-

val of the pastor...about the time the pastor and congregation begin to notice that their expectations of this call may be slightly different but again it can be scheduled any time.

It is the desire of the Office of the Bishop that together we spend less time dealing with conflict and more time supporting mission and ministry. - *Deacon Connie Schmucker Assistant to the Bishop for Leadership*

The retreat will be held on Friday, January 25th from 7-9 pm, and then from 8 am - 5 pm on Saturday the 26th. It is open to the entire congregation. Materials are \$12 per person or couple. All council members, staff, Deacons, committee chairs, and ministry leaders are particularly urged to attend. It will be led by Rev. Don Reiter.

# Mission and Ministry

## From the Stewardship Team

### STEWARDSHIP of CHURCH-GOING!

That's an odd phrase.

We know that stewardship is the act of caring: for what has been placed before us, for all of God's creation, for all of God's people.

Ask one hundred people why they attend church, and likely there will be one hundred different answers. Some answers will be very similar; "I go to worship God", "I go to give thanks", "I go to find a closer relationship with Jesus", "I go to learn more about the Bible", "I go to recharge my spiritual battery".

Inquire of different Christian churches about their focus, and why a "church-shopper" might choose that denomination, again, there will be multiple answers. Aside from the obvious, basic purpose of re-

vealing God to all, (or some) people, many Christian divisions have specific agendas. Some, home- in on saving souls. Others espouse memorizing the most Bible verses. More maverick denominations downplay the entirety of Scripture to reconstruct specific passages that hint at myths like, "the Rapture", or, saying and doing the right thing to insure salvation, handling poisonous snakes to show faith. One television group even advertised that believers could purchase multiple pails of non-perishable foods, and invest in a stake of their tiny communal living facilities while preparing for the "last days".

On many occasions, Pastor Jeff has used the phrase, "the Lutheran Witness of the Gospel". There is an emphasis in our approach to Scripture that

is distinct to the Lutheran Church. We are blessed, along with our neighboring and national congregations, to be partners with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. That gives us significant reasons to be Church-goers.

Many other worthy organizations: Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Elks, Red Cross, St. Jude, et al, have their particular focus on where to fill needs.

Our ELCA has resources; ministries, missions, programs and funding, covering the broadest areas of need, at home and in the world. As Lutheran church-goers, active in outreach to neighbors and strangers, we, in our stewardship can say, "I go to church because it's the best way I can make a difference in the world..... and in myself." - Richard Duncan

## Office Manager Update

After 1 1/2 years serving as our interim Office Manager, Yvonne Hauschild has decided to step away from the role. In addition, the person we offered the position to this summer, who then had a serious health issue, has decided reluctantly

that she cannot take the position for health reasons. Thus we are trying to fill the position first on an interim basis and then permanently. The interim person could end up as the permanent hire. The council has already begun reaching out to potential

interim candidates. In the meantime, office hours may be irregular—calling ahead before showing up is probably a good idea. Finally, a BIG THANKS to Yvonne for her help these past 18 months! She is willing to help train the new hire.

## From the Deacon's Desk

### A New Year

Time to look back on the past year in what seemed like the blink of the eye, and remember our successes, the ones not so successful, and loved ones now gone.

### A New Year

We all look forward to a new year and hope our resolutions will make it better than the last. Some we keep; some we are unable to.

Your Deacons, Susi and Frank, have come up our own resolution. We take two of Jesus' sayings, and try to live each day by them.

The first, ".....forgive us our sins, just as we have forgiven those who sinned against us....."

The second, "....love your neighbor as you love yourself."

Forgive. Very easy to say, but.....at times it may be hard to do. Remembering our own shortcomings may make it not so hard to forgive others that have caused us hurt. Ask for forgiveness from the ones that we hurt, and forgive ourselves for those "shortcomings" as we try to correct them.

Love. "Treat yourself as you treat others." Think about that. If you find out that you are not treating yourself the way you like, think how the

others feel being treated that same way. Treat others as you want to be treated. It works both ways.

Forgive and love. Remember the loved ones that have passed. Remember and *cherish* the loved ones that we have now. Forgive and love them, for they may be gone in that "blink of an eye", just as we may also be gone that quickly.

*In Bishop Eaton's Christmas letter, she writes about the brevity of life. We will take the liberty and paraphrase and quote some of it.*

*"The cradle-to-grave progression is our path; the inevitable decline of our strength.*

*From Psalm 103, 'As for mortals, their days are like grass; they flourish like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more.'*

*Our lives are not a meaningless trudge from cradle to grave, but a joyful journey. We tend to think the possibility of self-improvement and renewal is limitless: there is always another day, more time, another chance, but it is not."*

Since our time is limited let us **GO** and have a

**BOLD**, *meaningful* new year.

**B** - Believe that we are here to do God's work.

**O** - Be **Observant**, a servant of God. Observe what God is doing in the world. Be aware of your neighbor, the stranger. Acknowledge them. A smile and a nod can go a long way. By being linear you run the risk of when you do look, there may be no one there to see or to see you. *You run that risk of being alone in a sea of God loving people.*

**L** - Listen for the Holy Spirit. Go in the direction He is nudging you. The Holy Spirit can bring you to places that you may not want to be; not comfortable. But remember, it is God's will, not ours, that we are here to do.

**D** - Do it. Go out and try your best to do God's will. If you fail, try again. If you fail, .....*do* try again. Remember that if we succeed or not, we are still saved by God's grace. Give it your best.

So go out and have a **BOLD**, but humble New 2019 Year.

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, watch over us as we try to do what you ask of us. Forgive us when we fail, and keep us humble when we succeed, and dear God, always bless us all **REAL GOOD**. Amen.

## Faith Community Nursing Update

Human trafficking is global. Genesis tells how Joseph was captured by his brothers and sold into slavery in Egypt..

John Newton as a young boy was taught by his father and later became the Captain of a slave trafficking ship. During a horrendous storm he retreated to his Captain quarters and there he rediscovered his faith and penned "Amazing Grace."

If you suspect Human Trafficking contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888.

The recent presentation from Baycare FCN focused on human trafficking, which was defined as modern day slav-

ery. The presentation was by a local pastor and his wife from the Church of the Holy Spirit located in Safety Harbor. They became involved when approached, as they are Philippines, as were the victims in which later became know as The BOCA 39. They were able to provide a safe house and transported the victims to church services as well as helped to provide medical care, which can lead to victims becoming certified, as a pathway to citizenship. Then, unbeknownst to the pastor, contributions appeared in the offering plate in the form of gift cards and cash to the victims. A small church, with a big heart was able to

help and make amazing changes in many lives. Now Grace, a small church with a big heart, and love for their community, has been called with the opportunity to serve their community with a service to meet the needs of people with special needs and their families.

Mark 2:3-4 (NSRV) "Then some people came, bringing to Jesus a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let the mat on which the paralytic lay."

## Community Wellness Event

There will be a Community Wellness Event on Saturday January 5, 2019, from 9 am to 1 pm at First Baptist church: 6800 Trouble Creek Road New Point Richey. There will be a Bloodmobile, free screenings e.g. blood pressure, Glucose testing, cholesterol testing, COPD screenings, body mass index, Advance Directives and many health education topics presented. You do not need to pre-register or fast for screenings. Kids can checkout the fire truck, ambulance and medical unit plus enjoy activities.

# “THANK YOU!”

Dear Grace Family,

I would like to thank the wonderful people that moved my furniture from my apartment to the church, and then on to my new apartment at Grand Villa in Dunedin. A special thanks to Gary Neil for painting the dresser and for finding me a lamp. I also enjoyed the many cards that so many of you have sent over the last weeks. I'm busy adjusting to my new living arrangement.

Rita Burneik

To Grace Lutheran Church,

Thank you so much for helping our shelter by donating ladies jackets to us. Your donation is much appreciated and will help our women towards their road of rebuilding their lives. Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!!-

From all of us at the Haven House

Dear Grace Congregation,

Thank you for the many gifts and cards we have received this Christmas, as well as the many expressions of support you have given us in the last year. May God continue to bless all of us in the next year as well.

In Christ,

Pastor Jeff, Jenny, and Joseph

To My Grace Family

Thank you for my cards, phone calls, text messages and visits. I enjoyed each and every one. Your prayers worked as my surgery appears to have been a success. I am looking forward to seeing you all once again. Many good wishes for a very Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year.

God Bless,

Jill Grote



To the people of Grace Lutheran Church,

Thank you all so much for the continued support you've given to me and my family during this past year, especially with my health issues and family challenges. We appreciate as well the many gifts we have received over Christmas.

¡Gracias!

Pastor Lydia and family

# Regular Event Updates

## Men of Grace

The Men of Grace now meets on the 1st Thursday of the month, still at Sunset Grill in Clearwater. This month's meeting will be at 9am at the Sunset Grille in Clearwater on Thursday, January 3rd.

## Community Breakfast and Lydia's Closet

The Community Breakfast and Lydia's Closet will be held on Saturday, **January 12th** at 9 am. The date of the breakfast has changed to the 2nd Saturday for each month.

Will meet in the Garden Room on January 9, 10:00 am and discuss Zookeeper's Wife by Diane Ackerman. This is

## Young at Heart

The next Young @ Heart lunch/meeting will be at 12pm on Thursday, January 10 at Benedicts located at 2632 Bayshore Blvd in Dunedin, right next to the Sheriffs Youth Ranch thrift shop. We're looking forward to another fun year. Contact Florene Bencivenga with any questions: [flovena@verizon.net](mailto:flovena@verizon.net) or 727 773-2766. Young @ Hearts is open to all.

## Children's Church

Children's Church has resumed with two groups led by Deacon Connie and Judy Ishida respectively.

## January Book Club

a war story about Polish zoo keepers who hid over 300 people from the Nazis in empty animal cages. All are

## Gopher Help Needed

Every Friday the Gophers meet to help maintain the inside and outside of the property. This time of the year with the snowbirds gone and

people on vacation, illness, etc. they are really struggling to get things done. There are jobs for both inside and outside to do. If you can help for

## Elizabeth Circle

The Elizabeth Circle will meet on January 24 1pm-3pm. We meet in the Garden Room and the gate will be open for access. Our study is from the current issue of "Gather" magazine. If you do not receive Gather magazine call Connie Puls at 446-4091 and she will get the study information to you before the meeting. All women are invited, coffee and desert will be served. If you need a ride call Connie.

## Council Meeting

The next Congregation Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 8th at 6:30 pm in the Garden Room..

welcome to join. See Vicki Eis with questions or email at [veis49@yahoo.com](mailto:veis49@yahoo.com).

even a few minutes between 7:30 am and 11:00 am. Please call Cliff Bittner 727-771-0684 or just show up in the Fellowship Hall.

## January Birthdays

01/01 Shelly Urban  
 01/13 Ingrid Durhan  
 01/15 Linda Sladek  
       Gail Elder  
 01/23 Steve Davis  
 01/24 Isaias Martinez

Tom Norman  
 01/26 Adrienne Cox  
 01/27 Bob Graves  
 01/30 Candy McDamiel  
       Suzanne Norman

## January Anniversaries

01/03 Ralph & Anne Burson  
 01/14 David & Christina  
       McClenning  
 01/21 Phyllis & Glen Dumdie

# Prayer Corner

## Tuesday Prayer Chapel

The Prayer Group meets at 11am on Tuesdays in the

Prayer Chapel. Requests for prayer can be made using the

Communion Records in the bulletin.

## Prayer Chains

The Prayer Chains are activated to begin praying for members, families, and friend that

are in urgent need of prayers. They need more people to help with this ministry. If

you are interested please call Connie Puls 727 446-4091.

## Prayer List

**Prayers** are requested for: Linda Almond, Stephanie Adamitis, Pastor Lou & Barbara Haseley, Duke Tieman, Betty Biddle, Cathi Adams, Michael Morales, Wade Buehler, Gloria & Tollie Holtzclaw, Betty Daege, Dianne William, Rosemarie & George Smith, Gary Neal, Kathleen Wacker, Karen Bates, Pam Long, Rev. Lydia Villanueva, Don Eunis, Glen Dumdie, Gladys Calhoun, Lorraine Reinhard, Kathy Falco, Pat Hudson, Bonnie Redler, Dianna Frasier, William Mathis, Kathy Leotta, Brytt Mathis, Joseph Valentin, Rita Burneik, Ralph Burson, Jean Schlegel, Bobby Schlegel, Hilda Taylor, George & Phyllis Clark, Jill Grote, Zach Hauschild, Geneva Johnson, the family & friends of Marion Voltz, & those still suffering from natural disasters and violence and terror (including those unjustly or unnecessarily separated from their parents or children).

## Please Pray for Military Personnel w/Grace connections...

-Marine Lance Corporal Heather Burson, granddaughter of Anne and Ralph Burson

-Seaman Third Class Kyle Wassen, grandson of Connie Puls,

-Marc Calhoun, nephew of Wayne and Yvonne

Hauschild is in the Air Force

-Aldo Granados, son of Pastor Lydia and member of Grace, is in the US Army Reserves locally.

-Maj. Christopher Conklin, a chaplain with the USAF, is Lorraine Rheinhart's grand-

son.

-Gabrielle Falco, Pat and Tony's granddaughter, was commissioned as a lieutenant in the U.S. Army and accepted at the exceptional Walter Reed Hospital as a medical student.

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*God's Work. Our Hands.*



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Rev. Jefferson Cox, Pastor

**Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting**  
**Sunday, January 27th**  
**At 12:00 pm**

*To receive annual reports, to approve a Spending Plan for 2019, and other items that may appear on the agenda. Constitutionally, items may be added to the agenda up to 5 days before a Semi-Annual Congregational meeting.*