

GraceFull Visions

MARCH 2020

From the Deacons' Desk

Advent is a time in which we anticipate and prepare for the birth of Jesus. Lent is a time of anticipation and preparation of our remembrance and celebration of the suffering, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Both times turn us to Jesus. Both times cause us to reflect on His great love for us.

Some people "give up" some favorite item as a sacrifice to remember Jesus's ultimate sacrifice for us. Maybe you don't give up anything, and that's OK. Lent could be a time when we look at ourselves, not

to criticize, but so we can think about the many ways that keep us from God. How do we avoid God? Why do we? Why can't we totally believe? Why are we followers of Jesus only sometimes?

Lent can force us to stop and think about everything unimportant in our lives, the burdens of our lives. Lent can make us throw off this weight and help us truly realize what we are – human beings with problems, mistakes and flaws. We are mortal, we are messy, we are sinful. Lent helps us recog-

nize we are real and admit we are in need of a Savior.

Jesus cared for so many, Jesus was the innocent man who suffered for the sins of all. Give up sweets, social media, sleeping in Sunday morning, a favorite TV show, turning away from our neighbors, cursing at other drivers,

Jesus gave up his life for us. So instead of us giving up something for Lent, we might try to do a bit more for someone else, take on an additional task for a friend who is struggling.

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Why not give it up for Jesus? Why not give our hearts to Jesus? Why not follow His footsteps, do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God? (Micah 6:8)
- Deacons Susi and Frank

Mid-Week Lenten Services and Lenten Evening Pilgrimage

Join us Wednesday mornings in Lent for a Lenten series led by **Pastor Lydia Villanueva** entitled "God's Gifts to the Church." Our service and learning opportunity begins at 10 am, and is followed by a light but delicious "bread and soup" luncheon.

In the evenings we will continue our tra-

dition of embarking on a "Lenten Evening Pilgrimage" as we visit and worship with our Lutheran brothers and sisters in Christ in the area. The locations are as follows (notice the exchange regarding the sites on the 11th and 18th):

- March 4 – St. Mark, Dunedin (Dinner at 6 pm/

Service at **6:45 pm**)

- March 11 – Lutheran Church of the Palms, Palm Harbor (Dinner at 6 pm/Service at **6:30 pm**)
- March 18 – Prince of Peace, Largo (Service at **7 pm**)
- March 25 – Lutheran Church of

the Good Shepherd, Seminole (Dinner at 5:30 pm/Service at **7:00 pm**)

- April 1 – St. Mark, Dunedin (Dinner at 6 pm/Service at **6:45 pm**)

Mission and Ministry

Stewardship

Stewardship has many sides. We know that each year the Stewardship Team at Grace is involved in encouraging the congregation to consider, prayerfully, how we can sustain our financial responsibilities and grow our ministries.

If our team had a "mission statement", it would be to inform, educate, support and appreciate the stewardship possibilities for all ministries

and programs at Grace Lutheran Church.

One particular ministry that stands out for our support and appreciation is the monthly article, "From the Deacons' Desk". Here, Deacons Susi and Frank provide a warm and thoughtful dialogue about various questions and possibilities regarding life in our church. The careful way it is crafted leaves room for church members to see them-

selves (ourselves) on either side of the questions and answers. Ultimately, we are strengthened by the way they resolve the situations they present.

Be sure to re-read, "From the Deacons' Desk", to reflect on the importance of their message.

Your Stewardship Team

Congregation Work Day

Spring will soon be here and Easter is on the way. Many tasks need to be accomplished to prepare Grace for the coming season, and the Property Committee is scheduling a Congregation Work Day for Saturday, March 28th, from 8:00 AM to 12:00 Noon.

Lunch will be provided following.

Please plan to join us on the 28th. There is work to be completed both inside the Sanctuary, in the Fellowship Hall, and outside on the campus. There will be tasks available for all levels of skill

or physical ability. We need your willing hands and hearts.

If you have questions, please contact Lorraine Bickell at 727-614-9677 or Steve Davis at 727-400-4308, The Rain Date for the Work Day will be Saturday, April 4th.

Special Young at Heart Activity for March

Great News... On Thursday, March 12, the Young at Hearts lunch is in the President's Board Room at the Belleair Country Club at 12:00 noon, located on 1 Country Club Lane, Belleair.

This is a wonderful spot and we will select from their very reasonably priced menu. Just a couple of things to remember: 1) The Club prefers

CASH (as there is a fee attached if you use your credit card.) 2) Collared shirts for men.

After the lunch, and if time allows, we will take a stroll over to the boutique Belleview Inn which was once the magnificent Belleview Biltmore. The hotel is quite lovely and well appointed. One great feature

is the paintings of Chris Still who was commissioned by the hotel for his works of art.

Please let me know if you are interested no later than March 8th. If you sign up and decide not to go, please also let me know. Even if it's the day of event. Thank you. - Florence B. at 773-2766

Souper Bowl Sunday Report

Way to go, Super Bowl fans! On Souper Bowl Sunday, 106 lbs. of food, lots of it soup, was donated to the RCS Food

pantry. It will make a difference to the people in need of food in our community!!!

Card Ministry Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are needed for the Card Ministry Committee. This includes sending greeting cards for birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas, etc. Stamps will be provided by the office. If you are interested, let Phyllis Dumdie know.

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Sunday Falco's Recent Activities

- Worked with Pastor Earnest from the City of Praise International Church to facilitate a usage agreement for his congregation on Sunday and Tuesday evenings.
- Continued to work with cleaning services, including providing extra disinfectant specifically for viral pathogens throughout the property
- Updated the Church Website Calendar Daily. Stay Connected!
- Talking with other venues for wedding receptions, etc. (When Grace Lutheran needs to refer to another venue for any reason.)
- Continue to show church facility several times a month to future renters. Accepting deposits to secure the church property and receiving payments before all events.
- Continue to manage our full-time monthly renters who use our facilities several times a week. Building relationships to effectively work together for their events and all other events. Also keeping payments on a timely manner.
- Continue to provide consistent hospitality for refreshments after both services, setting up the cookie cart managing weekly volunteers and keep the tea and juice flowing. Helping to prepare facility Sunday morning for all services and cleaning Fellowship Hall and kitchen after services.

Regular Event Updates

Elizabeth Circle

Our Circle will meet on **March 26th** this month from 1:00-3:00 p.m. in the Garden Room. All women are invited to join in and enjoy some coffee and dessert. - Deacon Connie

Movie Time

Come join us on Thursday, March 5th at 3:00 p.m. in the Highlander Room to watch "What Dreams May Come". Refreshments will be served. This event takes place on the first Thursday of each month. Come and enjoy! - Gary Neal

Council Meeting

The next Congregation Council meeting will be held on **Tuesday, March 10th** at 6:30 pm in the Garden Room.

Confirmation

Confirmation classes will meet on Sundays, **March 1, 8, and 29** at 3:00 pm in the Highlander Classroom. Grades 6 and up.

Community Breakfast & Lydia's Closet

Saturday, **March 14** at 9 am. We are now asking for men's and women's underwear.
- The Closet Crew

Men of Grace

This month's meeting will be at 9am at the Sunset Grille in Clearwater on **March 5**.

12 Steps Tranquil Mind

... is a Women's Closed Step and Big Book study of Alcoholics Anonymous. This means that any woman who is having a problem with alcohol and desires to stop is welcome. We meet on Tuesdays from 6:00 - 7:00 pm in the Highlander Room.

Adult Sunday School

A reminder of our Adult Class each Sunday morning on the Old Testament books I

Samuel and II Samuel. We start at 8:45 a.m. each Sunday

March Book Club

Book Club will be meeting on March 4th at 4:00 p.m., and April 1st at 4:00 p.m. during Lent. In March we will discuss A Walk in the Woods by Bill Bryson. This is about a walk down the Appalachian Trail. We are reading Chapter 4, entitled 'Wisdom Stories' in Inspired by Rachel Held Evans.

On April 1st, no fool, we will discuss The Library Book by Susan Orlean at our 4:00 p.m. meeting. Also, we will discuss Chapter 5, 'Resistance Stories', in Inspired by R.H. Evans.

We have room for one or more if you'd like to come and join us! All are Welcome.

in the Highlander Room. Come join us!

March Birthdays

3/01	Barbara Haseley	3/08	Syrena Valentin	3/17	Iris Saxby
3/03	Connie Glace Kathleen Johnson	3/11	Christina McClenning Darby Graves	3/18	Florence Bencivenga
3/05	Anne Bittner	3/12	Rosemarie Smith	3/24	Virginia Dittmer Alexander Stevenson
3/06	Lisa Hauschild	3/16	Hildegarde Schmidtke	3/25	Kristine DeTrano

Prayer Corner

Tuesday Prayer Chapel

The Prayer Group meets at 11am on Tuesdays in the Prayer Chapel. Submit prayer requests through the Communion Record Sheets.

Prayer List

Prayers are requested for: Marc Calhoun, Linda Almond, Barbara Haseley, Duke Tieman, Betty Biddle, Cathi Adams, Michael Morales, Wade Buehler, Gloria Holtzclaw, Betty Daege, Dianne William, Rosemarie & George Smith, Gary Neal, Kathleen Wacker, Karen Bates, Pam Long, Rev. Lydia Villanueva and family, Don Eunis, Lorraine Reinhard, Bonnie Redler, Kathy Leotta, Brytt Mathis, Joseph Valentin, Rita Burneik, Bobby Schlegel, Hilda Taylor, George & Phyllis Clark, Jill Grote, Pastor Bruce Edwards, Tom Stanziano, Larry Timmons, Carl Stone, Neftali Garcia and family, Kelly Sullivan, Susan Gunn, Roy Pruitt, Brad Snyder, Iris Valentin, Eliezar Granados, Deacon Connie Puls, Matthew Brumback, Joan Keeton, and those suffering from natural disasters, violence, and terror (especially those in harm's way while serving in the military and 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, is stationed in San Diego. She is a mechanic in charge of maintaining aircraft.

-Marc Calhoun, nephew of Wayne and Yvonne Hauschild is in the Air Force. And has been deployed to one of the difficult locations. He is married with four children, and would appreciate your prayer.

-Aldo Granados, son of Pastor Lydia and member of Grace, is in the US Army Reserves locally. He works at Bayfront Health Hospital and attending college. No longer living at home.

-Maj. Christopher Conklin, a chaplain with the USAF, is Lorraine Rheinhart's grandson. He had been redeployed to the Middle East.

-Gabrielle Falco, Pat and Tony's granddaughter, was com-

missioned as a lieutenant. in the U.S. Army and accepted at the exceptional Walter Reed Hospital as a medical student.

-USCG Seaman Brennan Wells, Houston TX, nephew of Sunday Falco.

-USCG Seaman Samuel Steward, Grand Isle, LA, nephew of Sunday Falco

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Rev. Jefferson Cox, Pastor

Annual Commitment Appeal And Consecration Sunday

Part of our Lenten discipline as a congregation is to make our financial commitments for the year in response to our spending plan represented by our budget. This year the Stewardship Team and the Congregation Council believe we can make this our “*Break-Even Tipping Point.*” That is, we can make this year the point at which our congregational income meets our expenses. You will be receiving more information about how we can achieve that daring goal, and especially how each of us can be a part of that legacy for our 60th anniversary.

**We will be consecrating our commitments on Sunday,
March 29th.**