

"Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."
(Phil. 1:2)

GRACE... to you

June
2014

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Transitions

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Upcoming Events:

A message from Pastor

"If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change." Giuseppe Di Lampedusa, Italian novelist. This quote may seem strange or even maddening to some especially if they do not like to change. The world is constantly changing. Thus, if one wants things to remain the same, he keeps changing, so that what he wants to remain the same does not go away.

Another quote to the same effect is "Just because everything is different doesn't mean that anything has changed." Irene Peter, American writer. We often put different and change as synonyms. This second quote is a very Lutheran statement that Luther himself would agree with from reading his writings on life, faith, and the Bible. From 1517 to the present, Lutherans believe, teach, and confess God's Word and not a particular era of the church whether it be medieval times, the middle ages, the age of enlightenment, modern age, or the current post-modern age. As the confessions say throughout along with Scripture, it is by faith alone, not faith and tradition. Jesus told the Pharisees that they were 'white-washed tombs' - meaning that they looked clean, great and pristine on the outside with their adherence to traditions and outward acts of piety, but inside they were dead or a place holding death.

This is not where we are as Lutherans. Looking at statistics about denominations, Lutherans as a whole in the world, are now mostly African. That is very different from the original Lutherans being German.

11 Tim 3:14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, 15 and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Although, Lutherans are different now, they have not changed because they still cling to the truths of God's Word...faith, grace, and scripture alone. It is hard to live in a time of global, national, and local transition on so many levels. But if we want to remain faithful, we have to manage these transitions by His Word, so while we may look different, what we believe, teach, and confess does not change or fall by the wayside.

In Christ, Pastor Clow

President's Message

Submitted by Claude Hendrickson

Here it is June and we still have many projects that require work around our church. We will be entering Phase II of our church renovations. We are asking people who have not pledged in the past to please consider pledging now for help in paying for these projects. We will have Pledge cards available for you to use.

The next projects will be the painting of the stained glass windows in our church. However, before we can get to that some of the casings are not in good condition and must be replaced. This is going to take some time as the paint that is on the windows currently is lead based.

Along with the windows, the back parking lot and hill will be redone this summer. There is also a patch by the handicapped parking space by the Preschool modular that needs to be repaired as well.

Some of our sidewalks are also uneven, have cracks, and cement missing. It would be great if there is someone or a group of friends who would take on the task of fixing the sidewalks. It is important to make sure everyone is safe.

We had our first successful tag sale in May and made \$386 dollars and that will be used for the handicapped ramp. We will be having another tag sale on May 31st. We are looking for more donated items. We could also use some help in setting up and putting away items we use for the tag sale. Many hands make light work. Won't you please consider spending an hour or two helping with the set up or the packing up of items? It would be most appreciated. We are also in need of more items that we can sell. If you want items picked up, or have items you want to drop off over at church, please call Claude Hendrickson at 860-967-6174.

Treasure's Report

Submitted by Mike Stevens

At the April Board of Directors meeting I presented the financial information for the first quarter of this year (January 1st - March 31st). Below you will find the numbers for that period.

Expected Regular Income for the year	\$138,263
Expected Regular Income for Q1	\$ 34,565
Actual Q1 Income	\$ 37,975
Actual Q1 Expenses	\$ 38,850
Shortfall	\$ 875

The good news is that our actual income in the first quarter was higher than expected. The bad news is that our expenses were also higher than we expected. We spent \$875 more than we took in in the first quarter. As we enter the summer months I am concerned that our income will drop with lower attendance. Please prayerfully consider either Simply Giving or make up offerings so we can continue to meet our expenses through the summer months.

If you have any questions or would like more information please contact me after church during fellowship or at mike@mestevens.com.

Stewardship Commission

Submitted by Bobbi Eddinger

Thank you to Nancy Ruffino for presenting the children's message today. She discussed time and how many minutes there are in a week. She reminded the children that time is a gift from God and everyone has the same amount. It is up to each of us to spend some of our time in prayer, worship and telling others about Jesus. The kids seemed to enjoy all the numbers.

Last month Thrivent provided piggy banks for all the children. We plan on providing offering envelopes so that they can bring in the "share" money for the Lord during a special offering in June.

We felt that by teaching the youngest members of our church family, we will be helping to create good habits that we pray will stay with them for their lifetime.

It was also shared that Stewardship is planning a Ministry Fair during our annual Stewardship Emphasis this year. The date will be November 23.

Preschool Page



Preschool News

Submitted by Lisa Mentlick, Director

The school year is quickly winding down! We have been blessed again this year to have had the opportunity to work with wonderful families and an outstanding Preschool staff. We wish them all a safe and healthy summer. We will end our school year with Chapel Time Closing Ceremonies for the Pre-K students and family picnics school wide. Staff will enjoy an end of the year lunch together later in June. We thank Jesus for the great 26th year we just completed.

The last day of school will be on June 13th. If anyone needs to reach me during the summer, they can leave a message on the Preschool voicemail (860-346-0766). I usually work from home as much as possible in July and August. I will be here during the summer program weeks. (Weeks of 6/16, 6/23, and 7/7/14.) I can also be reached at home (860-349-0513) or by email (mrs.m.graceluthps@comcast.net). We wish to thank everyone who continues to support our mission! Have a great summer!

Fundraiser\$

Used Ink Cartridges and Cell Phones

Please continue to save and donate used cell phones and ink cartridges. Collection boxes remain in the downstairs hallway year round

Safety or Other Highlights

Please drive carefully and make an effort to inform guests and newcomers of our parking lot safety rules. Remember that traffic flows **one way at all times**. Only cars with valid Handicap permits from the State of Connecticut should park in those designated Handicap spaces. Also, in the lower lot, remember to park facing the building, so you will not be backing up into people walking to and from their cars. Safety is a year round effort. We appreciate everyone's cooperation with this important safety matter.



Those Serving

Greeters Needed!

Date: June 1, 2014

Elder: Allen Jensen

Acolytes: Samantha Pawlak

Fellowship: Social Ministry Commission

Date: June 8, 2014

Elder: Jack Zapatka

Acolytes: Dallas Dorman

Choir: Adult Choir

Fellowship: Social Ministry Commission

Date: June 15, 2014

Elder: Rick Eddinger

Acolytes Jessica Hart

Fellowship: Social Ministry Commission

Date: June 22, 2014

Elder: Allen Jensen

Acolytes: TJ Pawlak

Choir:

Fellowship: Social Ministry Commission

Date: June 29, 2014

Elder: Jack Zapatka

Acolytes: Trevor Stevens

Choir:

Fellowship: Social Ministry Commission

Altar Guild: Cathie Corridan, Janet Klare,
Joyce Swokkla

Deadline Reminders:

Wednesday, 8AM for that week's Sunday Bulletin

June 15th for the July/August Newsletter

Altar Flowers:

June 1, 2014

June 8, 2014

June 15, 2014

June 22, 2014

June 29, 2014

Volunteers Opportunities

Prayerfully consider filling any of the current requests listed below.

- ✓ **Greeters - Welcome people into worship service - sign up sheet in the narthex.**
- ✓ **Reach out to homebound members: Gertrude Klare, Ruth Voight and Robert Burkhart. Please check your church directory for address and telephone information.**

Grace Ev. Lutheran Church and Preschool

A family of faith

"Sharing Faith, Hope and Love in Christ."

Saturday Worship Service 5 p.m.

Sunday Worship Service 8:15 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

Youth Hour/Bible Study 9:45 a.m.

email: grace.evan.lutheran@snet.net

<http://www.gracemiddletown.org>

June 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:30 am Worship Service/Holy Communion 10:45 am Sunday School/Adult Bible Study Confirmation	2 7:30 PreSchool Board	3 7 pm PreSchool Board	4	5 7pm Musicians	6	7
8 9:30 Sunday School Play 10:45 am Sunday School/Adult Bible Study 12:00 Church Picnic	9 6pm Board of Directors	10	11	12 7pm Musicians	13	14 Team Grace - Relay for Life
15 10:45 am Sunday School/Adult Bible Study 9:30 am Worship Service w/Holy Communion	16	17	18 1:30pm Senior Communion Service	19 7pm Musicians	20	21
22 9:30 am Worship Service 10:45 am Sunday School/Adult Bible Study	23	24	25	26 5pm Elders Mtg 7pm Musicians	27	28 11:00-// Youth Group lake Compounce Bristol
29 10:45 am Sunday School/Adult Bible Study 9:30 Special 5th Sunday Worship	30					

India Mission

Mike Stevens

I work for an Insurance company in technology and I need to travel to India once or twice a year to visit the vendor that we use for developing our software. In October of 2012 I went to India for the fourth time in the last three years.

I decide that since I would be spending Sunday in Bangalore I would see if there are any LCMS affiliated churches that I could attend. I emailed Pastor to find out if there were any affiliated Lutheran churches in Bangalore. Pastor sent me a list of 4 which he found by contacting the international relations office at LCMS headquarters on my behalf. After I arrived in Bangalore on Saturday I began calling the numbers. The second call I made was to Pastor Priestly Balasingh. When I asked about service on Sunday we spoke for a while and he gave me the address and directions to the Hope Lutheran Church in Bangalore.

On Sunday, my driver and I set off to find the church. After about an hour and asking for directions several times we finally found the road on which the church was located and realized that we would have to walk some distance as the road is not fit for automobile traffic. My driver and I set out on foot down alleyways with people cooking, doing laundry and relaxing in the alleyways between rows of one room houses. The people I passed gave me very curious looks. I don't think many western visitors pass their way. As I walked around the corner of the alleyway I caught my first glimpse of Hope Lutheran Church.



When I walked in, the president of the Church was there to greet me. He was extremely grateful that I had come to worship with them. As the congregation started arriving they put me in a seat of honor near the pulpit. The church seats 60-70 people. There was standing room only with maybe 100-120 people there that day. Some were sitting on the floor and some were perched outside the windows and listening in. The service was partially in English and partly in their local language Tamil.

Pastor Balasingh prayed with the congregation for my safe travels. He prayed for our pastor and for the people of our congregation at Grace Lutheran Evangelical Church. Then he asked me come up to the pulpit to say something to the congregation. I somewhat nervously walked to the pulpit (almost forgetting to remove my shoes before stepping up as is the custom). I then began to speak. I remarked to the congregation how passionately they sang hymns. I also told them how grateful I was for their hospitality. I told them that I was grateful to have been saved by finding Christ in this world so that I may live with him for eternity in the next. I said that this is what brings us all together and that we share this truth regardless of where we are from or where we live. Pastor Balasingh translated into their local language. I think it was well received. The Pastor presented me with flowers and asked that I come with him to greet people as they left. I shook hands or bowed to every worshipper as they left the church. They were extremely friendly and excited to meet this visitor and brother in Christ from another country. I felt very warm and special as they left the Church.

Pastor Balasingh informed me that his wedding anniversary was Wednesday and asked if I would be his guest in his home for dinner. I accepted his offer and I met his unbelievably wonderful wife Shanthi, their two sons and her parents. Shanthi cooked a delicious meal. They presented me with wonderful

gifts for Rhonda, my girls and me. Pastor Priestly and I talked about his training at the Concordia Seminary in St. Louis and his evangelism in India. He told me that he and his wife started another church in Bangalore and asked if I would visit. I said yes.

I visited the Naether Memorial Evangelical Church with them and a coworker on Friday, the day I was to leave India. The church is named after the first LCMS missionary who came in the 1890s to India. The Pastor told me that he built the church with donations from his friends and classmates in the United States. This church is primarily made up working class former Hindus who converted to Christianity.



I did not know at the time but my coworker was searching to find God in her own life. During our visit to the church and subsequent dinner she and Shanthi spoke for hours about their faith and experiences. Through those conversations she also had a profound experience of spiritual rebirth that day. After visiting the church and having dinner with the Pastor, Shanthi and my coworker I asked my driver to drop them off at their home and then bring me to the airport for my flight back to the USA that night.

During my hour long trip to the airport, the driver who had heard all the conversations we had with the Pastor and his wife as we drove from place to place told me of his own conversion to Christianity from Hinduism. He told me of his sick wife, the life savings that he gave to temples and doctors that could not cure her. He spoke of his family's hunger, poverty and illnesses to the point of near family suicide. Then he spoke of his rebirth through hearing the words of our Lord. He told me how his wife was healed and how he found a decent paying job and now has an apartment and enough food to eat. Most importantly, he told me how he found the Holy Spirit and how his life had changed. As I was getting ready to get out of the car at the airport he asked me for the names of my wife and children so that he could pray for them daily. I was moved by his story and humbled by his request.

God led me to meet the Pastor, Shanthi and Raju my driver. He used me to connect my coworker with them as well and help strengthen her faith. I was in awe of these people who were so generous with their time, with their gifts and with their love. I was humbled by their faith given the poverty and adversity they face.

The experience confirmed and deepened what I already knew. God works in our lives in personal and profound ways to remind us to love one another as he loves us.

On March 10th of this year I went back to India for my 5th trip. I attended service at the Naether Memorial church with Pastor Balasingh. I would like to thank our congregation for your gifts and donations. As a result of the donations from our church, Naether Memorial has been able to purchase new pews in their church. As we speak, the IELC in India is going through upheaval as they work on electing new leadership in their church. Pastor Balasingh is on the list of candidates for president of the IELC. As you can imagine, the church there has many needs. We have and continue to respond to meet some of those needs. Thank you for your past and continuing support of this mission.

Mike Stevens