

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

GRACE... to you

October
2014

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1055 Randolph Rd Middletown, CT, 06457 | Church (860) 346-2641
www.gracemiddletown.org | grace.evan.lutheran@snet.net | Preschool (860) 346-0766

Time For Reformation

A message from Pastor

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Pastor's Message
- 2 President's Message
- 3 Stewardship Commission
- 4 Vision Meeting
- 5 Those Serving

Some people get nervous when they hear about the need for Reformation. For us as Lutherans, hearing this brings to mind The Reformation that began Oct. 31, 1517 when Martin Luther posted 95 Theses on the Castle Church door in Wittenberg, Germany. The major themes that came out of those theses boiled down to 3 rallying cries:

Sola Gratia, Sola Fide, Sola Scriptura

Sola Gratia = Faith Alone - God loves everyone in the world, even though they are sinful, rebel against Him and do not deserve His love. He sent Jesus, His Son, to love the unlovable and save the ungodly.

Sola Fide - Faith Alone - By the suffering and death of Jesus Christ as the substitute for all people of all time, He purchased and won forgiveness of sins and everlasting life for them. Those who hear this Good News and believe it have the eternal life that it offers. God creates faith in Christ and gives people forgiveness through Him.

Sola Scriptura = Scripture Alone - The Bible is God's Word without error. In it, He reveals His Law and Gospel of salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ. It is the sole rule and norm for Christian teaching.

In our sinfulness, we are constantly going through the reformation process when come to worship, remember our baptisms, receive Holy Communion, forgive others, and receive forgiveness. Ephesians 2:8-10 says, "*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to walk in them.*" Forgiveness, life, and salvation are constant blessings that the Lord has for us. May we be reminded that as Lutherans we never lack spiritual blessings in Christ. In that light, we can live life being a blessing to others reflecting that blessed light of Christ.

In Christ, Pastor Clow

Upcoming Events:

President's Message

Submitted by Claude Hendrickson

I'm happy to report that Phase II of our Church Projects have been completed. They include:

Parking Lot Paving

Sidewalks Repaired

Painting of the frame on the Stained Glass Windows and Trim

Snow Guards of the roof over the entrance to the PreSchool.

We continue to be busy having tag sales once a month. Our last tag sale will be October 4 with a rain date of October 11. We would appreciate more items to sell. Money from the tag sale will be used for a handicapped ramp.

We will be gathering information for Phase III of our projects that will be worked on next year.

RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE October 22, Wednesday, from 1:30-6:30

Grace volunteers will host a Red Cross Blood Drive on Wednesday, October 22, from 1:30 to 6:30 pm. Donations of finger desserts and sandwiches (usually tuna, egg salad, and ham and pickle have been made following Joyce Swolka's successful tradition). Packaged cookies, etc., can be brought to church the previous Sunday and labeled for the Blood Drive.

Please sign-up to assist if possible on the sheet taped to the Fellowship kitchen door or call Ginny Gumz at 860-349-8239 if you can either donate food items or are willing to work a few hours to serve the donors. Thank you for considering helping out at this Community event.

Stewardship Commission

Submitted by Bobbi Eddinger

Stewardship 2014 emphasis starting October 26

" God's Gift of Family"

1. October 26 Reformation Sunday - Gift of Faith, Baptism into the Family of God

Special Bible Study 11:00am Fellowship Room

2. November 2 - Gift of Children
Stewardship 'giving bowl'
Nurturing/teaching the faith

Thrivent's Alice Reitz here to present on Creating a Legacy 11:00am Fellowship Room

3. November 9 - Gift of Mothers & Fathers (Grandmas & Grandpas)

LCMS's Al Macke to present on Wills/Estate Planning 11:00am Fellowship Room

4. November 16 - Gift of Local Church Family

Ministry Fair where each Ministry presents what they do. 11:00am Fellowship Room

5. November 23 - Gift of Global Family
Ghana Children's Ministry and School, Lydia Asante
'Let Me Learn of Jesus' (Sunday School Mission)
India Ministry, President Rev. Priestly Balasingh IELC

Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Wrapping 11:00am Fellowship Room

PLEASE SHARE YOUR COINS WITH OUR CHILDREN

Starting October 12, the Sunday School children will be starting to collect coins to use in a Stewardship Object Lesson. These coins will then be "SHARED" with these ministries. Please help by bringing your coins to church each Sunday until November 23.

Ghana MMOFRA'S (children's) Mission, the school planning to be built on Lydia Asante's land in Ghana, to be called Grace Academy, Lydia Asante, Evangelism Chair

"Let Me Learn of Jesus" with Rev. Nicholas Salifu in northern Ghana at Concordia Preparatory School (nearly 300 students, half of whom come from Muslim families wanting a good education for their children), adopted as 2014-2015 Sunday School Mission, Rhonda Stevens, Education Chair

India Ministry - Reverend Priestly Balasingh, Mike Stevens

Orphan Grain Train – CT branch at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Terryville, Al Macke, LCMS

Notes

Vision Meeting Bible Study

Submitted by Pastor

On Rally Sunday, during Bible Study, we held our annual Vision Meeting. As we do at these meetings, it is an opportunity to think about the past year of the mission and ministry happening at Grace. There is the list of 'pros' and 'cons', as well as those things that are on both pro and con sides.

Before we started listing things, we talked about our church theme, 'Blessed to be a blessing: In Christ, with Christ, and Through Christ.' That led us into the Hymn, "Be Thou My Vision" and how our planning in life, whether for family or in church, is to have Christ be our vision in all that we do. We talked about what Christ did for us. He died and rose again for our forgiveness and eternal life. That's His blessing to us and it is what enables us to be a blessing.

The 'pros' and 'cons' are listed below:

PROS

- Long Range Planning - property improvements
 - New roof
 - Parking Lot fix
 - Side walks
 - Stained glass window casing fix and painting
 - Flag pole fix
 - Youth room updating
 - New phone system
- People are giving more:
 - paid for roof and other items not needing an outside loan.
 - Paid off the current loan.
- St. Vincent DePaul Sunday dinners
- Active Stewardship Commision (monthly Stewardship theme on Sunday)
- Volunnteers are great
 - We don't pay for secretary, lawn mowing, snow plowing, organ playing,
- Tag Sales
- Vision meeting (brainstorming)
- PreSchool Ministry
- Amazing Grace Food Pantry
- Youth momentum continued

- Constitution Review
- Ghana Mission (started building wall)
- Lemonade and Cookies at Tag Sale for Ghana & youth
- More People in Bible Study
- Outreach to community (Mission Initiative list)

CONS

- Social Ministry position still vacant
- Communication improvement
- Desire for people to want to be informed (newsletter [hard copy & online], Church Facebook, bulletins.
- Not enough giving to meet budget items of sexton, secretary, organist.
- More help in encouraging giving to Amazing Grace
- Hurt feelings, church harmony
 - basic communication between individuals
 - personality conflicts
 - absence of approaching someone in Christ when upset
 - gossip (many people know of a conflict before the two people have met to talk)
 - need reconciliation
 - peer mediation
 - get so focused, not allowing God's rest and forgiveness
- People not attending Bible Study
- lack of small groups

You'll notice that there are some things in both categories. For example, we don't have enough funds in budget for paying for various things, but giving is up overall due to the Long Range Planning projects and paying off our loan early as well as fantastic volunteers so that we continue God's mission and ministry here. Another example is that we have good strong Bible Studies on Sunday and Wednesday, but still more people could attend.

We thanked God that 3 of our goals from last year went well (youth momentum, Long Range Planning, Mission Initiatives). The other 2, communication and small groups, we ask God to continue to help us in them. The goals we picked for next year are as follows:

1. Relationship building
2. communication
3. Ghana Mission
4. Gospel Outreach

As always, the reason we pick 3 or 4 items to focus on is not to limit to only those items but to give us a focused vision for next year. We continue to rely on God to give us His forgiveness, life, and salvation that we may in our redemption thankfully live out our vocations in service to those God has placed us in the midst of.

Those Serving

Greeters Needed!

Date: October 5, 2014

Elder: Allen Jensen

Acolytes: Abby Asante

Fellowship: Social Ministry Commission

Date: October 12, 2014

Elder: Jack Zapatka

Acolytes: Katie Stevens

Fellowship: Social Ministry Commission

Date: October 19, 2014

Elder: Rick Eddinger

Acolytes: Dallas Dorman

Fellowship: Social Ministry Commission

Date: October 19, 2014

Elder: Allen Jensen

Acolytes: Jessica Hart

Fellowship: Social Ministry Commission

Deadline Reminders:

Tuesday, 5:00 P.M. for that week's
Sunday Bulletin

October 15th 9:00 A.M. for the November
Newsletter

Altar Flowers:

October 5, 2014

October 12, 2014

October 19, 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."

Sunday Worship Service 9:30 a.m.

Youth Hour/Bible Study 10:45 a.m.

email: grace.evan.lutheran@snet.net

<http://www.gracemiddletown.org>

October 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 7pm Musicians	3	4 Tag Sale 8:00a.m.-2:00p.m. 5:30-8:00 Youth Group Pizza Games
5 9:30 am Worship Service/Holy Communion 10:45 am Sunday School/Adult Bible Study	6 7:30p.m. Pre-School Board 6:30-7:30 Pack 1010	7 7 pm PreSchool Board	8	9 7pm Musicians	10	11
12 9:30 Sunday School Play 10:45 am Sunday School/Adult Bible Study	13 7pm Board of Directors No PreSchool	14	15 1:30pm Senior Communion Service	16 7pm Musicians	17	18 Pork Dinner Harvest Festival 4:30 Youth Activities 5:00 Hayride 5:30 Dinner 7:15 Bonfire
19 9:30 am Worship Service w/Holy Communion 10:45 am Sunday School/Adult Bible Study 11:00am Congregational Meeting	20 1:30-4:30 PS Workshop Fellowship Rm	21	22 Red Cross Blood Drive	23 PS Family Night Open House 5-7pm Fellowship 5pm Elders Mtg 7pm Musicians	24	25
26 9:30 am Worship Service 10:45 am Sunday School/Adult Bible Study Reformation Sunday Stewardship Program Begin	27	28	29	30 7pm Musicians	31	