

Grace United Methodist Church
 300 E. Gartner Rd.
 Naperville, IL 60540-7424

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GRACE NOTES

A Communications Ministry of Grace United Methodist Church

Building up the church
to the glory of God.

Ephesians 4:12

April 2008

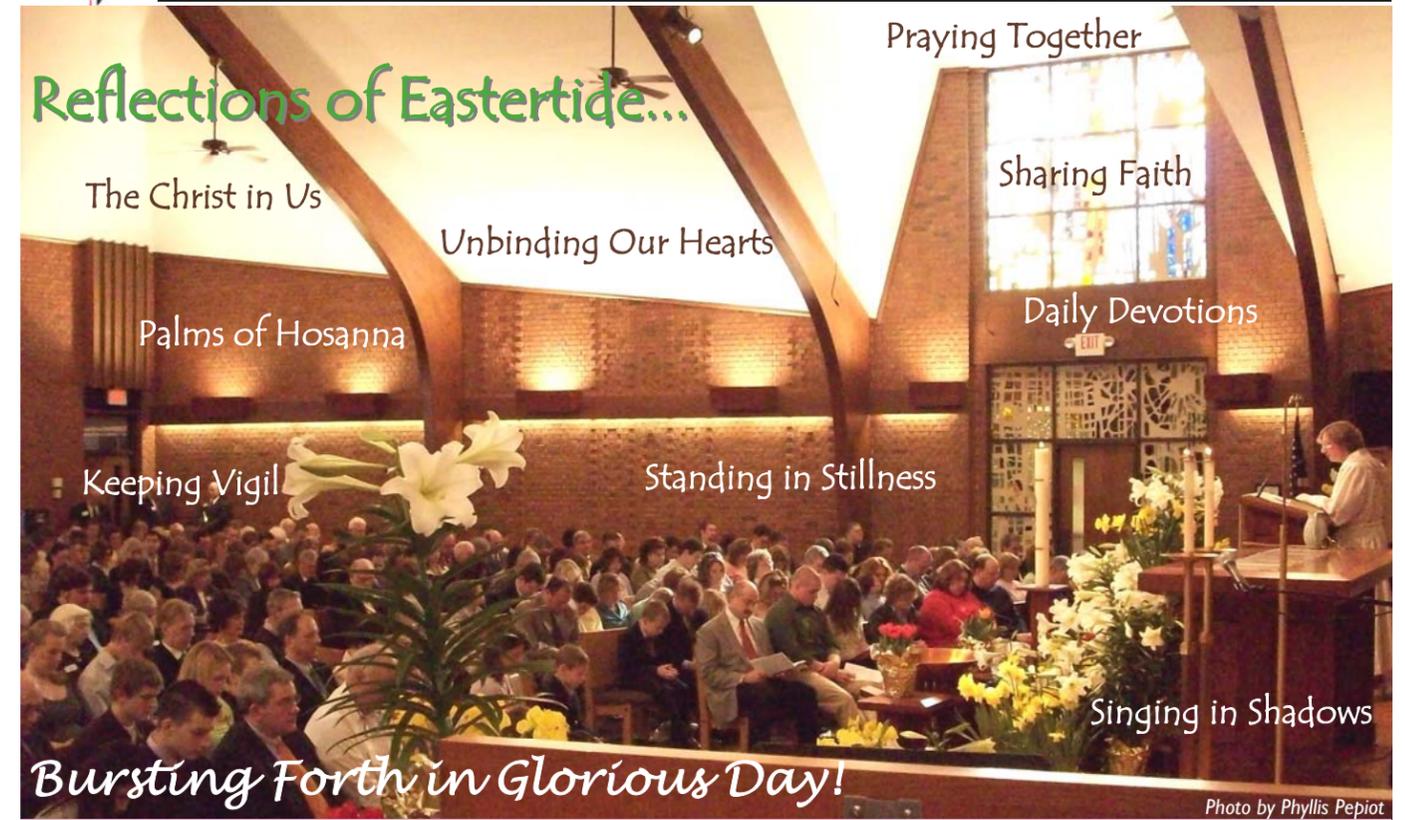


Photo by Phyllis Pepiot

Coming This Month! Look What April Has In Store for Grace!

Friday, April 18, 6-10pm
at Grace

Details inside...

"Under the Acacia Tree"

Saturday, April 19 • 6:30 pm • Fellowship Hall

Tickets on sale now in the church office.
\$20 per person or \$50 per family

A special night for families, featuring East African cuisine from Masala Yangu (kid-friendly options available), African songs from the Grace Praise Team, children's stories from Florence Mubichi, Sudanese desserts, Kenyan jewelry, and more!
A special offering will be taken in support of the building of water wells in Darfur and internally displaced persons in Kenya.

Summer Youth Missions 2008

Did you know that anyone attending a summer mission trip pays a tuition that does not include transportation OR the cost of supplies needed for the trip and the communities in which we work? In an effort to offset these costs, our summer youth mission participants are holding three fundraisers this year, the first of which was our March 9 "Stone Soup" and Pie Luncheon, a HUGE success! Our next two fundraisers are a Golf Outing with Silent Auction on **May 17**, followed by "Suds on Sunday," a carwash at Grace on **June 1**. In addition to our fundraising efforts, our Grace family will once again be given the opportunity to participate as shareholders in our youth missions. Come with us in body, spirit, or prayer!

Family-friendly!

Weekly Communion

Music from Vickie Wagner

Join the Circle!

Without you, it's just square.

Join us Saturday evenings, 5:30 pm, in the Activity Center for an informal, intimate alternative to Sunday worship

Let's Show the True Face of Grace!

Sign up for your photo session to be in our directory!

Be sure to sign up for your photo session for our 2008 pictorial directory! We want ALL of you in our pictures! Photo sessions are at Grace; dates and times are as follows:

Tues.-Fri., April 29-May 2, 3-9pm
Sat., May 3, 10:00am-4:00pm
Tues.-Fri., May 6-9, 3:00-9:00pm
Sat., May 10, 10am-4:00pm

SIGN UP FOR YOUR SESSION ONLINE (www.peopleofgrace.org)
 It's easy! Just click on the Lifetouch button on the home page, and sign up for a date and exact time! You may also sign up by calling Phyllis Pepiot in the church office (630-355-1748), or sign up in the Activity Center on Sundays. Photography and proof viewing occur on the same day. The whole process takes about an hour.

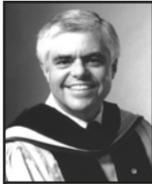
Sign up today!
 Make-up sessions will be available at other area churches. There will be a \$10 charge for submitting a photo (some exceptions apply). Photo submissions must not be copyright protected. Publication authorization forms must be submitted for copyrighted photos.



"THE MAJESTY AND THE GLORY" SUNDAY, APRIL 20

8:15 and 9:30am Worship Services

This year's spring Chancel concert features Vivaldi's "Magnificat," a miniature musical gem sparkling with the effervescence of the Virgin Mary's biblical song of praise. The Grace Chamber Singers will then present Robert Ray's "Gospel Magnificat" with the same text, but in the well-loved vernacular of Black-Gospel music. The concert will close with a montage of sacred choral works woven together to form a memorable spring morning of worship through music!



Pastor's Journal

The Long Winter

It has been a long winter. There was more snow than in recent memory. Markets have been in turmoil. Interest rate changes have led many homeowners into the pain of economic stress, if not foreclosure. In a rare move, the Federal Reserve Bank acted to protect a brokerage bank from receivership.

Five years on, and brave men and women of the coalition forces are still in peril in Iraq and Afghanistan. The people of Darfur are no closer to a secure life. Kenyans killed each other, surfacing long-dormant resentments following a controversial election process. And the Palestinians of Gaza and the People of Israel are no closer to a peace process, recognizing each other only through rockets and war planes.

Indeed, this winter has been long. But more voters have turned out for primary elections than in recent memory. The discussion of the role of race and gender in leadership and in America is moving to new and more productive levels. We are learning more about what it means to be a nation of diverse peoples. There will be clear choices to make in November that concern the future path of this country.

Spring rains water the flowering plants and threaten floods. It seems that all blessings come amidst the complex threats of life. Perhaps you might consider creating a blessing of your own with the economic stimulus payments from the United States Treasury in May. The goal of these checks is to stimulate the economy for everyone. The Church will turn these checks into services right away, stimulating the local and national economy and multiplying the effect.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Bob's "Journals" also appear regularly in Positively Naperville

"Women's Night Together" Renews Mind, Body, Soul

The Psalmist reminds us that we are made by our Awesome God, and precious to him: "I thank you, High God—you're breathtaking! Body and soul, I am marvelously made!" (Psalm 139:14) "Marvelously Made" is the theme of this year's "Women's Night Together" event, sponsored by the Grace Evangelism team, on Friday, **April 18**, 6:00-10:00 p.m., at Grace. Our Keynote Speaker, Rev. Dr. Cecelia Swafford Harris, will speak to us about just how marvelously made we are! In addition to her inspiring message, women will enjoy a delicious dinner from Famous Dave's, and participate in two of the following workshops. You never know, there may even be some five-minute massages, too!

WORKSHOPS (Choice of two):

- *Awakening to Grace: The Healing Path of Yoga*, presented by Rev. Adrienne Ann Ilseman, Minister of Healing Arts
- *Meditation, Exercise, and Reflection*, presented by Rev. Im Jung, Pastor of the UMC Wis. Conference and wife of Bishop Jung
- *Fit for the Future*, presented by Julie Schlegel, Exercise Physiologist and Personal Trainer
- *Sharing the Life of Faith with Children*, presented by Rev. Raney Good, Deacon of the UMC Northern Illinois Conference
- *Finding Wholeness in Spite of Hormones*, presented by naturopathy specialist Dr. Chad Wasson
- *Tending the Soul with an Herb Garden*, presented by Joan Wessling Rocchi, perennial manager of The Growing Place

Cost is \$25 on or before April 13 and \$35 after. Register in the church office, or if you received a green brochure form, you may mail it in or drop it off in the office. You may also register and choose workshops online at www.peopleofgrace.org (click the "Women's Night Together" link on the home page), but you must pay in person on the night of the event or in advance in the church office.

2008 Annual Hamball Luncheon!

Presented by Grace United Methodist Women

Featuring

Hamballs

German Potato Salad

Assortment of Cold Salads

Variety of Pies

Rolls and Beverage

Friday, April 11, 11:00am-1:00pm

In Grace's Fellowship Hall

Tickets: \$8.50 per person

Purchase tickets in the Grace Church office or in the Activity Center on Sundays.

Table reservations can be made for five or more

Open to the public—invite your friends!

A Delicious Fundraiser for Local and Worldwide Mission Projects

The deadline for May Grace Notes news is **Monday, April 28**. Grace Notes is published for the members and friends of Grace United Methodist Church. To submit news or articles, please contact Barb Ceruti, Director of Communications, via e-mail at gumcnotes@peopleofgrace.org; phone at 630-355-1748, ext. 240; or drop off news in the church office, ATTN: Barb



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300 E. Gartner Rd., Naperville, IL 60540
630-355-1748 • www.peopleofgrace.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Comprehensive church announcements appear weekly in "Grace in Mission," our Sat./Sunday bulletin insert, and online at www.peopleofgrace.org.

Spring Sisters Bible Study Sessions

Women of Grace, spring Sisters Bible Study sessions begin the week of **April 7**, meeting on Monday afternoons, 1:00-2:30 p.m. Our study is "Flawed Families of the Bible: How God's Grace Works Through Imperfect Relationships," by David and Diana Garland. On Wednesday evenings, beginning **April 9**, 7:00-8:00 p.m., we will begin our study of "Desperate Women of the Bible," by Joe Kadleek. Come join us for one or both of these studies! Books and sign-up for the Monday session are in the church office; for the Wednesday session book and sign-up, contact Sandy Bray at 630-420-0923 or braysnap@msn.com.

April Yoga Series

For a 5,000-year-old art, yoga is alive and well! Rev. Adrienne Ann Ilseman will soon begin two six-week spring yoga series, one on Tuesday evenings, 7:00-8:00 p.m., **April 8-May 13**, and the other on Thursday mornings, 6:30-7:30 a.m., **April 10-May 15**. Six-week series are \$48 and meet in the Chapel. Register in advance with Rev. Carol Madalin at 630-355-1748, ext. 246.

Annual Hamball Luncheon (see page 2)

Women's Night Together (see page 2)

"Under the Acacia Tree" (see page 1)

April Book Club

Grace's Book Club will meet again Wednesday, **April 23**, 12:45 p.m., in the home of Eleanor Preston. We will discuss *Enrique's Journey*, by Sonia Nazario.

Fellowship of Christian Men

FCM will meet for its second quarterly meeting of the year on Friday, **April 25**, 6:30-9:00 p.m., for dinner and discussion. Contact Bob Pacanowski at bob-fod@aol.com or 630-355-0408 for registration information and future events.

Rebuilding Together-Aurora

Pick up your hammers, dust off your work boots, and join us Saturday, **April 26**, on our mission to fix up a home for a family in Aurora. Skilled and unskilled workers needed. Contact Thatch Irwin at 630-961-3278 or tirwin@wideopenwest.com.

"Cuisine for a Cause"

On Saturday, **April 26**, Naperville CARES will host its 5th Annual "Cuisine for a Cause" benefit to alle-

viate homelessness and facilitate self-sufficiency among Naperville families. Held on the Naperville campus of NIU, 7:00-10:30 p.m., this fun event features the specialties of over 20 of our city's finest restaurants, live and silent auctions and local entertainment. Much needed are people to set up, bus tables and run food. Grace youth and confirmands, this an important step in service! Contact Amy Williams at 630-369-0713 to attend or to help out with this worthwhile event.

Europe 2010 Informational Meeting

Thinking about making 2010 your year to tour Europe? Do it with Grace! On Sunday, **April 27**, there will be an information-gathering meeting with Pastor Don and Rev. Dr. Carol Findon at 4:00 p.m. in Room 250. We will share a video, our itinerary, costs, Q&A, and other necessary information. Contact Don and Carol for further information at 630-416-8393.

Naperville Men's Glee Club Concert

Please join us for a wonderful evening of music when the Naperville Men's Glee Club performs at Grace on Saturday, **May 3**, at 7:00 p.m. This concert will debut a song written by Jackson Berkey especially for the Glee Club! Grace member Bill Langham's family commissioned this work in honor of his 75th birthday. A silent auction will begin in Fellowship Hall one hour before the concert and continue during intermission. Auction results will be posted in the Narthex following the concert. Available at the door, tickets are \$15 for adults; \$12 for students and seniors. Contact Judy Langham at 630-862-3799 for more information.



Family Workday Needs You!

Our Grace Trustees are once again hosting a Grace Church Family Workday,



Q: What's wrong with this picture?

A: SNOW AT EASTER!

this year on Saturday, **May 10**, from 8:30-11:30am. Help us do some much needed spring clean-up in the areas surrounding the parking lots on both sides of the church. Please sign up in the church office, or call 630-355-1748 to volunteer an hour or two of your time. Bring your rakes, wheelbarrows, gloves, gardening tools, etc. Refreshments will be served!

Parenting Workshops At Grace



During the months of April and May, Grace Church is offering a class for parents of junior high teens, and a workshop for parents of young children.

"Parenting Your Teenager" is a free, six-week class led by Rev. Carol Madalin, running **April 6-May 25** (no class on May 11), 9:30 a.m. on Sundays in the Chapel.

This course takes a biblical look at parenting junior high-aged children, focusing on such topics as identity, turmoil, rebellion, and legacy. Contact Rev. Carol Madalin at 630-355-1748 for more information.

"Hand in Hand" is a four-week workshop series for parents and caretakers of children aged birth through eight years. Sponsored by Grace Church, Weekday Children's Center, and Parent's Day Out, this workshop meets Tuesday evenings, 6:30-8:00 p.m., on **April 8, 15, 22, and 29**, in Room 234 at Grace. Workshops are \$10 each or \$30 for the whole series (you save \$10). Register for one or more workshops in the church office. Childcare is available by calling Margaret Harrison at 630-355-1748. Topics and presenters are as follows:

- **April 8-Family Life as Mission**, presented by Erin Cetera, Director of Weekday Children's Center
- **April 15-Guiding Young Lives**, presented by a professional at Samaritan Interfaith Counseling Center
- **April 22-Faith at Home**, presented by Margaret Harrison, Director of Christian Education at Grace
- **April 29-Relaxing Together**, presented by Rev. Adrienne Ann Ilseman, Minister of Healing Arts

Learn more about "Hand in Hand" at www.peopleofgrace.org; click the "Hand in Hand" link on the home page calendar.

In cooperation with Church Council, the Grace Stewardship and Finance Committee is working on a special appeal to Grace members to bolster funding in 2008 for the continuance of our ongoing Missions and Ministries. So much good comes out of Grace in so many diverse ways, it's difficult for us all to know and appreciate the extent of our impact. Our plan is to bring personalized slices of these ministries to worship each Sunday in April to tell more clearly the "Stories of Grace." We'll hear from those who are making it happen, describing in their own words what they do, and why, and what it has meant to those they help. With your help, we'll continue our programs and grow their impact in 2008.

At the same time, we take to heart feedback that reveals areas for improvement in how we're structured and how we engage the talents and skills of our members. We'll be continuing the Church Council "Listening Post" each Sunday through April, receiving your input and working to address issues and concerns promptly. Much of the input received to date can be addressed through the Natural Church Development (NCD) Program that has been active since 2007. We're re-energizing an effort to complete a survey of selected active members and will follow through with action planning once results are summarized and assessed. NCD identifies a set of key characteristics of growing churches, based on the assessment of over 1,000 churches. These characteristics in-

clude: 1) Empowering Leadership; 2) Gift-based Ministry; 3) Passionate Spirituality; 4) Effective Structures; 5) Inspiring Worship Service; 6) Holistic Small Groups; 7) Need-oriented Evangelism; and 8) Loving Relationships. We'll explore and explain each of these over time as they relate to Grace and systematically work on areas in which there is the greatest opportunity for improvement.

Be welcoming! Greet new members and long-time members. Introduce yourself to someone new. Wear those nametags and make Grace sing out with energy and engagement. Take Pastor Carol's quiz on page 3 and see how you can be a more welcoming member of Grace!

A Dream Re-focused...For Now by Dale and Anita Scholtens

Grace's Kenyan mission team of 12 Volunteers in Mission (VIM) is an enthusiastic bunch: we are about half-and-half "newbies" and veterans of Grace's first Kenyan mission trip in 2005.

To prepare ourselves for Grace's return to Kenya in July 2008, we planned a series of nine meetings from January through July. Necessarily, the meetings focused on the logistics of the trip—plane tickets, shots, raising funds—but more importantly, they allowed us to familiarize ourselves with Kenyan culture, examine and share our motivations for doing God's service so far away, and to simply get to know one another. They prepare us to function as a team!

Kenyan elections were held in late December 2007, and the political unrest there has been front page news many

times since. We are fortunate to have many in-country friends from our 2005 trip who shared their experiences in Kenya through e-mail. We learned of tribal violence, food shortages, 600,000 people displaced from their homes, and damaged roads and railways. We learned that, while the area where we planned to volunteer was safe, displaced persons fleeing violence were arriving in large numbers. We learned that another VIM team traveled to Kenya without incident in January, but another team's travel was scuttled (and their airfare lost) after volunteer organizations like the Peace Corps pulled out due to the unsafe conditions. We learned that much of the immediate care for displaced persons was being given through church-sponsored organizations, such as the United Meth-

odist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). Indeed, even as governmental and secular non-governmental organizations could do little to respond, church-based organizations remained committed and effective in their missions.

During our team meetings in January, February and March, we shared our thoughts and fears, prayed for God's guidance in Kenya, and asked God to help us make a sound decision for our trip. We recalled David's words acknowledging the Lord's wisdom and timing: "...You hold me by my right hand. You guide me with your counsel..." (Psalm 73: 23b-24a, TNIV). We wrestled with mixed emotions about going—loved ones' fear for our safety versus our own desire to serve. We wondered whether it might be better to redirect our plans toward

building temporary quarters for refugees.

In the end, we decided that the most effective way to serve this summer would be to re-focus our team on fundraising for church-sponsored organizations operating in Africa. The decision was bitter-sweet; we will miss the chance to be in close relationship with Kenyan Christians and the people they serve, yet we know we will meet the critical needs of many a people through fundraising efforts. We trust that God will make the time right for us to serve in Kenya next year.

Please join us April 19 for an evening of African culture, and help us to provide wells for the Darfur region of Sudan as well as relief to internally displaced persons in Kenya. See page one of this newsletter for details about "Under the Acacia Tree," a celebration of hope for Africa.

Grateful Thanks

- ✦ To all who helped with our "Stone Soup" Luncheon, offering ingredients, desserts, auction items/bids, or time and effort in any way
- ✦ To "Last Supper" actors Barb, Mike and Paul Ceruti, Mike Doll (Director), Karen Druzak, Christine Freeman, Jay Hruska, Thatch Irwin, Ralph Keiser, Harriet McCabe, Darrell and Sue Riedinger, Robin Schmuckal, and Joe Schofield
- ✦ To all of the ushers and confirmands who helped with our Easter services
- ✦ To Mario Dandre, owner of Carpet Crafts, Inc., who has volunteered to install carpeting for our April 26 Rebuilding Together-Aurora mission, and to Bob and Mike Triezenberg of Triezenberg Flooring Company, for donating the carpet

Is Grace a Friendly Place? By Rev. Carol Madalin, Minister of Spiritual Development and Growth

Is Grace a friendly place? Take this quick quiz and find out! (Answers on page 4)

1) How many "first contacts" (people who intentionally approach visitors) are typical when a new person comes to a Sunday service for the first time?

- A. Two
- B. Four
- C. Six
- D. Ten

2) What type of follow-up do new visitors receive?

- A. Letter from Pastors
- B. Personal visit with gift and information
- C. Personal contact with small gift
- D. Tour of the building
- E. All of the above

3) Typically, how do we rate on a "warmth" scale, from 1 (lowest) to 5

- (highest)?
- A. One
- B. Two
- C. Three
- D. Four
- E. Five



4) What is the most typical method by which new people find Grace?

- A. Personal invitation
- B. Driving by our church
- C. Phone book/newspaper
- D. Last Fling parade
- E. Grace web site

5) Which of the following are Welcoming Ministries, and what do they do?

- A. Grace Greeters
- B. Grace Guides
- C. Grace Lights
- D. St. Andrew Callers
- E. Wedding Hostesses



- F. Attendance Books
- G. Passing the Peace
- H. Connections in the Activity Center
- I. Grace family members
- J. All of the above

6) How comfortable are you talking to new people/first time visitors?

- A. Not at all
- B. A little comfortable
- C. Fairly comfortable
- D. Love it!

7) How can you be involved in the Welcoming Ministry at Grace?

- A. Volunteer for a ministry
- B. Invite friends and neighbors
- C. Actively engage with people you don't already know
- D. Contact the Evangelism Committee
- E. Call Pastors Carol or Lisa
- F. All of the above

Wrapped in Love: Prayer Shawls Touch the Lives of Many

In last month's *Grace Notes*, I asked for people who've been involved in the Grace Prayer Shawl Ministry in any way to contact me with their stories. I wasn't sure I'd hear from anyone, but in the past month, four women of Grace stepped forward with their heartfelt expressions of what this ministry of comfort and care has meant in their lives. Established in 1998 by women from the Women's Leadership Institute of Hartford Seminary in Connecticut, prayer shawl ministries have woven their way through churches across the country. The shawls themselves have made their way into the hearts, homes, nursery rooms—even operating rooms—of countless people in need of their special comfort and warmth. At Grace, our prayer shawl ministry consists of some dozen women who come together every month to knit these soft, luxurious shawls, praying over them, blessing them, and ultimately giving them to people in times of both struggle and joy. Here are the stories of some at

Grace who have been wrapped in these shawls—the "tangible evidence of prayer and love," as Grace Parish Nurse and prayer shawl ministry leader Pam Riley so aptly describes them.

—Barb Ceruti

Karen McCreary

"I moved here after a horrible divorce, a violent marriage, and Barbara Hoch stood by me. One day I saw her knitting a red shawl—my favorite color—but I was so wrapped up in my troubles, I didn't think much about it. Later, I received a beautifully wrapped gift from Barbara, one that I wasn't expecting. When I opened it and saw this beautiful red shawl, I thought, 'Oh, my goodness, I don't deserve such a thing!' Barbara told me, 'When I first begin knitting a shawl, I don't always know who it's going to be for, but it always amazes me that God shows me.' She got it right with me, because I feel her presence when I wrap myself in my shawl and feel God's grace through her. I know I have a praying friend like Barbara, and I am literally and figuratively

wrapped in God's grace. It's such a wonderful comfort to me, and it reminds me that I'm not alone. To be able to wake up in the night and feel that love around me is just wonderful."

Candyce & Laura Krumwiede

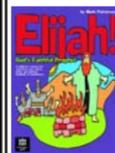
"In time of distress and uncertainty, we all desire the need for comfort, hope and solace as we walk through the difficulty. The gift of a prayer shawl was such a comfort to Laura and me during Laura's diagnosis of renal cancer, her surgery and recovery. Laura and I received the prayer shawl at the Longest Night Service in December, just a few days after her cancer diagnosis. As we were draped in these beautiful shawls, tears streamed from our eyes knowing that Grace Church was wrapping its arms around our pain and uncertainty of Laura's cancer. Knowing that Carol Madalin and Barbara LeMaster knitted each stitch with praying hands brought much comfort and hope to us.

In the week leading to the surgery, the shawls were instrumental in keeping us warm, not only because of the cold and snowy win-

ter days, but, most importantly, the shawls were a constant reminder that the Grace family was praying for our strength and for Laura's recovery. When the day for surgery arrived, the prayer shawl played a significant role for Laura: 'My mother and dad couldn't go with me beyond a certain point when I was taken to surgery, but the prayer shawl went with me. I was so relieved to have something to take to surgery with me. I wrapped myself in it as they wheeled me away from my family. When I was recovering in the hospital, I slept with it, as it made me feel secure. I will be ever grateful and I want to thank the prayer shawl ministry for taking the time to knit this beautiful gift and think of me.' Laura and I continue to wrap ourselves in these beautiful shawls. Many times in the past weeks as Laura recovers from surgery, I have found her napping with the shawl draped over her. The shawls are a constant reminder of the great ministries at Grace Church that are filled with

Continued on page 5

Music Notes



Children's Lock-in Captures Spirit of Fun!

Fifty-four choristers from the Junior Singers, Cherub and Angelus children's choirs participated in the March 7-8 Lock-in, kicking off the immense task of learning the annual spring children's musical with lots of crazy fun! Many of the lock-in activities were rooted in the lessons of "Elijah," the musical this year. When the children filled 20 shopping bags full of food for Loaves & Fishes, they saw first-hand how God provided for his great prophet, Elijah, by sending ravens to him daily with bread and meat. "This 'mission' project was a way for our youngest members to have a chance to be 'God's ravens' to those in need in our own community," said Director of Children's Choirs Lynn Leitzen. Along with a pizza dinner and a first read-through with the double cast of characters, the children also made fire batons as their craft project, hearkening to Elijah's call to God to



The Mar. 7-8 Lock-in gets a big thumbs up from young singers.

burn the sacrifice and the altar to prove who is the one true God. The fire batons also serve a practical purpose, as they will be used during the musical number "Send Your Fire Down." In the spirit of the challenge Elijah makes to the prophets of Baal, the children had some friendly competitions of their own, including carnival-style games, a scavenger hunt with flashlights, and "White Elephant Bingo." The Junior Singers, who spent the night at the church, also watched a late night movie and played volleyball at midnight! Thanks, everyone, for a great time!

The children's musical this year will be dedicated to the memory of Elaine Jungnickel, who dedicated hours of her time, talent and hard work to Grace's children's musicals over the years.

"Elijah!" Cast of Characters

Presented in worship Mother's Day weekend, May 10 at 5:30 p.m. and May 11 at 11:00 a.m.

DOUBLE CAST

Elijah: Mak Jungnickel, Nick Ameiss
King Ahab: Nick Ameiss, Mak Jungnickel
Jezebel: Hannah Truckenbrod, Julianna Doll
Palace Guards: Chris

Blair, George Thompson
Widow of Zarephath: Emily Blair, Michelle Irwin
Obadiah: Ben Correll, Kelly Shugh
 Many thanks to all the

parents who donated time and food to the Lock-in, and especially to "Miss Sherri" Nagy, "Mr. Bob" Rothe, Sue Riedinger, Brenda Calabrese, Anna Zimmerman, and Lynne Shugh.

"Is Grace a Friendly Place?" continued from page 3...

If you ask five people the question, "Is Grace a friendly place?" you may receive several different and unexpected answers, depending on the circumstances and context. Recently, Grace received a response card from a first-time visitor that was marked with a "1" (lowest) for the congregation's warmth in a Sunday service, but also a "5" (highest) for the personal visit they received the next day from our St. Andrew Callers. What a difference a personal conversation makes!

Our Welcoming Ministry at Grace is alive and well, with many different avenues for first contacts. **The answer to #1 is C.** If a new person enters our building on a Sunday morning to attend worship, there are six intentional contact points that are likely to occur. If a new person doesn't require valet parking, then the first person who should say "Good morning!" is one of our Grace Guides. They stand at the entrances and welcome all people to the church.

The second contact is our Grace Greeters, who stand in the entrance to the Sanctuary and welcome worshippers. During worship, a welcome is extended to first-time visitors by one of the Pastors, and newcomers are invited to meet at the Welcome Table at the back of the Sanctuary. A Grace Light will be there to welcome them again and give them a Grace mug with information and other goodies, offer them a tour of the building, and answer any questions they might have. When visitors sign the attendance book, their information is typed on a card and our St. Andrew Callers pay them a personal visit, usually the next day, bearing additional information and a box of yummy bread. The visitors also receive a letter from the Pastor thanking them for coming to Grace, which includes a green card for them to fill out about their experience with our church family. **The answer to question #2 is E** (all of the above).

On average, when we receive the green response cards back,

Grace earns a "3" on the warmth scale (**the answer to question #3 is C**). What does this mean for our Grace family? It seems that we are not all that welcoming in the pews, nor do we inquire of visitors if they have attended Grace for a long time (which is a nice way of asking if they are new here). How comfortable do we think new people would be entering a room full of people already engaged in conversation? Not many are willing to put themselves in that position. And even if they were, would they be welcomed by a Grace person? Unless a new person knows someone in the crowd, it's not very likely they're going to feel especially welcome.

Most visitors' responses reveal that the most typical way to find Grace is on the web! (**the answer to #4 is E**.) New people—especially those new to the area—check out the internet to locate a United Methodist Church. The second most common way to find us is by driving by our building, and a personal invitation is third.

The good news is that we have in place our ministries that reach out to new people, not to mention passing the peace opportunities, noticing visitors' names in our attendance books, and our Grace Wedding Hostesses, who warmly attend to all wedding participants and visitors. Our Grace Family, however, has the most significant occasion to engage newcomers with a smile, words of welcome, and an invitation to Connections or coffee hour.

There are many opportunities to participate in Grace's Welcoming Ministries (**the answer to #5 is J**, all of the above). If you answered C or D to question #6, then please do F in question #7! Your smiling face and welcoming presence is vital to making Grace a truly friendly place. It takes all of our Grace family to welcome the new and old alike. May we all unbind our hearts to let God's love shine through us and make us genuinely a people of Grace!

38% of new Christians and 30% of new members say they return to a church because of the warmth, the love, the "realness" of the church members.

From the "Unbinding Your Heart" Lenten Study Book

"Prayer Shawl Ministry" continued from page 3...

people who continuously offer their prayers, their devotion, and love to others. This outreach is what makes the Grace family so special. The Krumwiede family is ever grateful for this exceptional ministry at Grace Church."

Ruth Wills

"I became a part of the Grace Prayer Shawl Ministry about a year or so after it began. Some nights there are just a few of us, and other evenings, every seat is filled, with extra chairs brought in. Sometimes we knit or crochet to the sounds of the Chancel Choir rehearsing, or to a special CD someone has brought in, or to the murmurings of voices as we share about our lives. There is always a special feeling about those times, as we all are in service to create the shawls for those who need them in the Grace Church family and around the world. Sometimes we know who our shawls will go to, but many times we are just praying for the recipient, that they will have the love of Christ and the prayers of many surrounding them, having no idea who that person will be. At the end of our gatherings, we form a prayer circle, with each of us laying hands on each shawl, as we bless them to be ready for someone in need.

Having been on the giving end of this ministry, never did I think I would be the recipient of one of these beautiful shawls. Yet, last year just before my Achilles tendon repair surgery, Pam Riley brought one to me at a Stephen Ministry meeting. For once, I was speechless, and very emotional, as I know the love and care that goes into each shawl. It was exquisite, a deep marine blue, popcorn stitch shawl, created by Betty Laning. I couldn't wait to share with Betty that I had her shawl, and thank her for it.

On the morning of my surgery, I took my prayer shawl with me to the Naperville Surgi-Center.

After completing all the pre-op steps, the nurse said she would invite my family to come back and wait with me, and that my priest was here, too. Behind Ron and Jenn came Pastor Don, with his collar on, my 'priest.' I was so glad to see him. All this time, my prayer shawl lay on my lap, close at hand. A few minutes later, my nurse, Megan, came to tell me that they were almost ready for me and that I needed to give my 'blanket' to my family. I explained that this was not just a blanket, but rather a prayer shawl, and gave her a thumbnail sketch of our ministry. When Pastor Don was ready to pray, I asked Megan if she would like to join our prayer circle, which she did. Then we prayed, a special time for me. It was interesting to me that when it was time to go to the operating room, Megan asked if I would like to take my prayer shawl with me. I drifted to sleep, 'graced with peace,' holding it in my hands. Upon awakening after surgery, I became aware that my prayer shawl was covering me, no longer just a 'blanket,' even to the staff, but a special gift, sharing God's love and the prayers of many in its stitches.

Now as I prepare to crochet each shawl, I have a very different perspective about its creation, knowing how much it has meant to me to also be the recipient of one of these special gifts. My prayer and that of many of us continues to be: 'May God's grace be upon this shawl...warming, comforting, enfolding, and embracing. May the one who receives the shawl be cradled in hope, kept in joy, graced with peace, and wrapped in love. Blessed be!'"

The Grace Prayer Shawl Ministry meets on the third Thursday of every month in the Office Lounge, 7:00 p.m. Knitters/crocheters can work from home, too. Please contact Pam Riley at 630-355-1748, ext. 229, if you would like to knit, or if there is someone you would like to receive a prayer shawl. We do not accept payment for shawls.

GRACE PERSONALS

Sympathies to the Friends & Families of...

- Robert Stein, father of Julie Stein-Gocken
- Paul W. Sutton, husband of Rev. Lana Thompson Sutton, retired clergy of the Northern IL Conference of the UMC
- Clara Woehler, sister of Alice Silke
- Gwen Wu, wife of Dennis Tsai
- James Yates, father of Cathy Henderson

Baptisms

- Paige Anastasia and Jason Daniel, daughter and son of Mark and Janet Davis, were baptized on March 9
- Reed Ohnyu, son of Albert and Amy Song, was baptized on March 16

Celebrations

- Leighton Nicole, daughter of Brad and Bethany Keown and granddaughter of Timothee Keown, was born on March 7
- Jordan William, son of Jake and Laura Taylor and grandson of LuRay and Harold Workman, was born on March 7

Welcome, New Members!

- Grace Church welcomed the following new members to our Grace Church family on March 9. Watch next month's Grace Notes for a feature on our new members!
- John and Nancy Camp (child: Matthew)
 - Tom and Shelly Cinnamon (children: Nate and Joshua)
 - Tom and Audrey Dabareiner (children: Ethan and Grace)
 - Beth and Jeff Krasowski (children: Lauren and Ryan)
 - Otto and Joan Meglin
 - Mark and Suzy Olson (children: Charlie and Will)
 - Jason and Maggie Quaranto (children: Aubrey and Joey)
 - Jack and Jane Riddle
 - Mary Ann Thaman

Letters of Thanks

Dear Grace Church Members,

Thank you for your prayers, kind words, support, and love during the prolonged illness and death of my mother, Evelyn Hower. Your compassion, kindness, and thoughtfulness made her final days easier, knowing that she was surrounded by the love of her caring church family. Grace Church played a pivotal role in my mother's life for more than 75 years, and I think it's wonderful how so many of you reached out to her in her final days.



Thank you all,
Barbara Hower

If you have a letter or personal news you'd like to share, please e-mail gumcnotes@peopleofgrace.org, or call 630-355-1748, ext. 240.