Grace Notes

Gather to Christ • Grow as Disciples • Go to Serve

A Communications Ministry of Grace United Methodist Church, Naperville
August 2017

Can We Talk?

By Pastor Cindy Marino

So, what’s the deal with The United Methodist Church and the issue of homosexuality? And do we really have to talk about it at Grace?

From the Northern Illinois Conference (NIC) eNews: “You are invited to a critical conversation in today’s life of our church. On Saturday, September 16, at Naperville Grace UMC, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Bishop Sharon Zimmerman Rader will lead clergy and laity from the Northern Illinois Conference as we discuss who we are as part of the body of Christ, specifically The United Methodist Church. The purpose of the event is to discuss questions of identity, purpose, and mission as we think about the challenges that our differences around human sexuality present us in The United Methodist Church. This is not an educational event on homosexuality but on ecclesiology – the study of the mission of the church. Laity and clergy alike are invited.”

When the conference office called to ask if Grace would offer space for this conference, I knew that it was a Northern Illinois Conference event with the bishop, whom I trust and greatly respect. I realize that, even though we disagree?” In our divided culture, there certainly are many issues from which to choose. The conversation around who we are and what unites us as the body of Christ is vital for all to consider.

As your senior pastor, I challenge you to find within you the empathy to hear, understand and articulate the view of someone with whom you disagree. That means getting into the hearts and minds of those on all sides of the conversation. Here are two books that will provide some insight:

1. “Unashamed and Unafraid, Facing the Future of United Methodist,” by Rev. Wil Cantrell. This is a good place to begin for those unfamiliar with the arguments on all sides and looking for a fairly objective overview. It’s a quick read. Cantrell is a pastor in The UMC from Knoxville, TN, and was a delegate at General Conference in both 2012 and 2016. His book presents background material that helps make sense of how the issues have developed over time. He offers a brief description of the main positions of the traditionalists, progressives and centrists.

2. “Unity of the Church and Human Sexuality, Toward a Faithful United Methodist Witness,” put together by The UM General Board of Higher Education. This book delves into deeper theological arguments and is being recommended by Bishop Sally Dyck in preparation for the discussions on Sept. 16. The format allows for a 4-week study and there is a study guide available.

You are welcome to contact the church office (630-355-1748) or me (seniorpastor@peopleofgrace.org) for help in ordering the books, setting up a study for an existing group, or organizing a new study group.

I believe this congregation’s greatest strength is its ability to disagree in love. What unites us and makes that possible is our belief in a God that has created us in God’s image to love one another as God loves us. I am looking forward to great conversation!

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Save the Date!

UMW Fall Meeting

Faith and Human Sexuality - Claiming God’s Good Gifts.

Join us for the first fall United Methodist Women meeting on Tuesday, September 5, at 9 a.m. in Fellowship Hall.

Rev. Adrienne Ann Ilsemann will present one of three topics encouraged by the wider organization of United Methodist Women. She has much experience with this topic as one of the originators of our human sexuality program for 5th and 6th graders at Grace.

The luncheon hostesses for the Fellowship Hall gathering is Mary Circle. Contact Phyllis Pepiot (ppepiot@gmail.com) for more information.
Master Plan Update: Let’s Revitalize Grace!

By John Bodine, Grace Project Team Chair

We reached a final conceptual rendering of our Grace Renovation Master Plan and began cost assessment on Wednesday June 28 with a visit by a construction team associated with JNKA Architects. Following our most recent project review with JNKA on May 1, the Grace Projects Team met alone on June 13 to review the conceptual drawings and check alignment of the result with our goals. Key considerations included looking beyond just what we need today, and projecting our needs ten years down the road. A strong emphasis was maintained on achieving a welcoming atmosphere for Grace, adapting all four of our principal entrances to have more space for gathering, and connecting our building interior with the Lacy Garden and ourwooded surroundings. Plans for refurbishing our children’s area currently used during the week for Parent’s Day Out and on weekends by Grace Sunday School programs have not yet been detailed, but remain a high priority. Also exploited in our plans but not detailed will be refurbishing the Grace Kitchen and installation of Family/Handicap restroom conveniences to the Narthex and Fellowship Hall.

A major feature of the Master Plan is the expansion and brightening of the Narthex, with a goal of providing a flexible gathering space that can serve many purposes, but principally provide a very attractive and comfortable gathering and socializing space adjacent to the Sanctuary. We can imagine the Narthex becoming a very busy hub of activity throughout the week, and not just on Sunday. The plan includes additional windows facing towards our wooded settings as well as toward the Lacy Garden, and the intent is to provide additional access to the Lacy Garden so that it can serve an expanded role for gathering and quiet reflection.

The expansion of the Narthex has a cascading effect for reallocating space, moving Grace offices to the area just below their current location, and subsequently moving the Music Department practice rooms to spaces below the Activity Center (Adult Choir and Bell Ensembles) and to the current Grace offices. All are welcome!

Grace Hears Need for Greater Worship Experience

By Barb Ceruti

"You can hear the minister's every word much clearer. Therefore, you understand the complete message, and it's not like listening to a foreign language anymore," said Freda Whittle, a parishioner at Grace United Methodist Church in Naperville. She is referring to the hearing loop technology recently installed at Grace, which uses the telecoils in most hearing aids and cochlear implants to allow hearing-impaired churchgoers a greatly improved worship experience.

The hearing loop system at Grace was borne of a need expressed by several parishioners for better sound clarity and clarity than their hearing devices alone could offer. Ron Laub, facilities manager at Grace, acted upon that need, hiring Assistive Hearing Systems (AHS) of Palatine to install the system in April. Steve Thundor, AHS division manager and acoustical engineer, trained members and staff at Grace on how to use the technology.

Working with the telecoils in church members’ existing hearing aids, the hearing loop feeds audio signals wirelessly through them via electromagnetic waves. Thus, the background noise and muddy reverberations that used to plague those worshiping in the spacious, vaulted sanctuary is eliminated.

"I can hear the minister speak, which encourages me to attend church on a regular basis," said Grace member Miriam Harrison. "Church has become much more meaningful for me and those of us who are hearing impaired." Ron Laub, facilities manager at Grace, is delighted to hear Bible verses again. "I can even hear the total message and not just parts of it." Thunder, AHS division manager and acoustical engineer, trained members and staff at Grace on how to use the technology.

For houses of worship like Grace, more parishioners will be able to fully participate in worship again, as 84% of those with hearing aids have telecoils in their devices, and new models of cochlear implants are equipped with them. Said Laub, "It's very exciting for us at Grace to have this technology. We heard the need for it, and we’re happy to have been able to provide it. We are a very welcoming congregation, and the hearing loop allows us to extend that welcome more fully to everyone."

Special "Thank You" to the contributors that made the Hearing Assistance Loop possible at Grace:

Bill Abe Memorial Fund, Miriam Harrison, Joan Meador, Jim & Carol Nelson, Bob Owensby Memorial Fund, Wing & Jan Park and Temple Builders.

What's New for Children in the Grace Church Library?

By Jill Ryder

Recently the books, “Two White Rabbits” by Jano Buitrago and “The Journey” by Franc-esca Sanna were added to our Children's Section of the Grace library.

Both of these picture books are timely stories written from the perspective of refugee children who must leave their homes and what is familiar, in hope of finding a new home where they can be safe and begin a more secure life.

These books would be great for families to share and discuss with their children about the hardships, the strength, and hope it takes for all families leaving their homeland and taking that journey to a new, safer place they can call home.

Music & a Movie!!

Bring your lawn chair or a blanket and join us on Friday, August 18, for music featuring the Grace Praise Team starting at 7 p.m. and a movie screening at dusk. Free Popcorn provided! Drinks and other snacks will be available for monetary donations by Open Doors Ministry. All are welcome!