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grace notes

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Lenten Journey: Then & Now

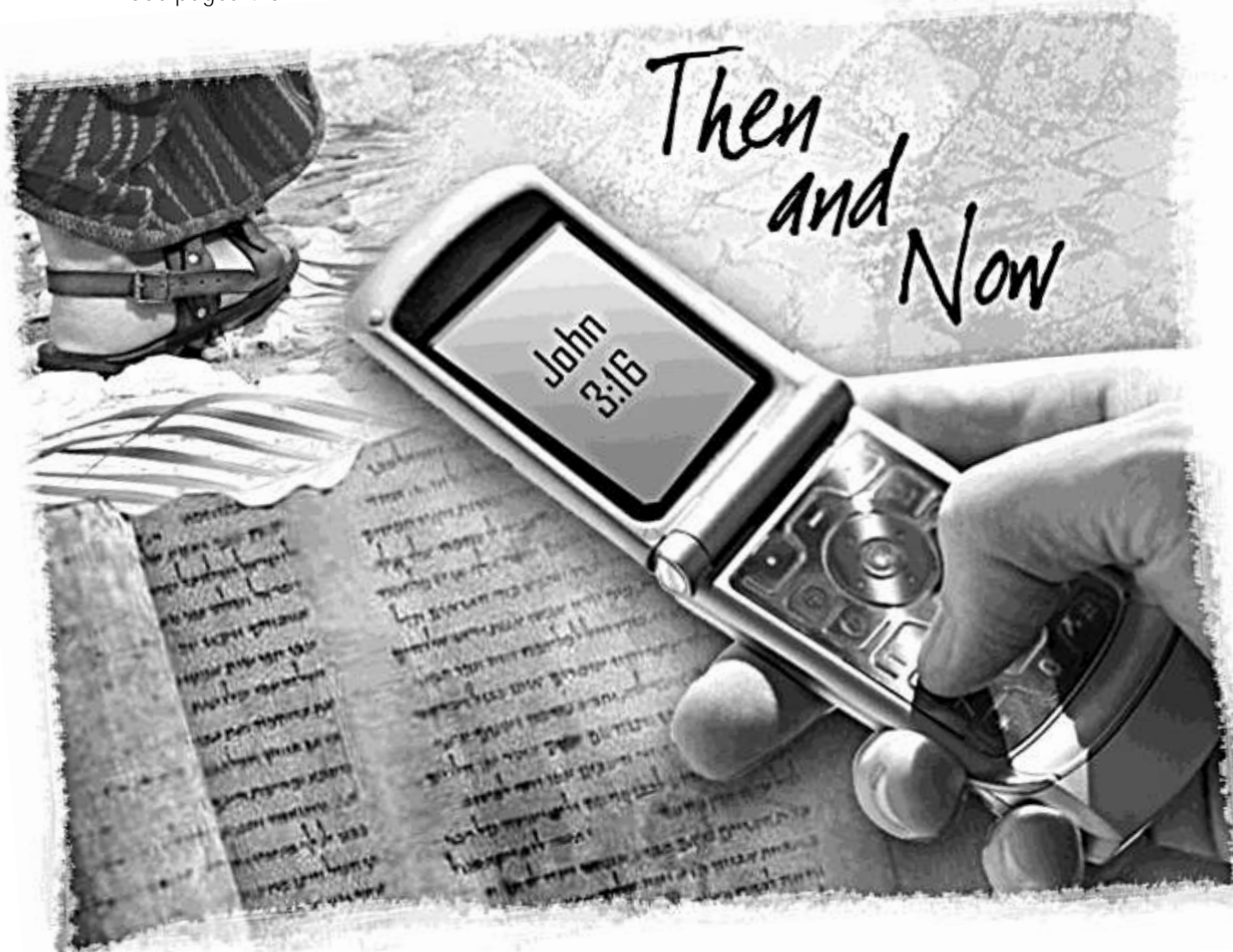
Lenten worship events and devotionals to help you prepare for Easter.

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The Elaborate Family Bible

Dusting it off and cracking it open!

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A Missionary in Your Own Town

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Our Spiritual Continuum REVEALed

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Serving Opportunities

A Missionary in Your own Town



Grace took 52 servants to Feed My Starving Children on Saturday, February 22. The team packed 12,928

meals which will feed 34 kids for an entire year! It was great to see the many new faces who came along this time to serve. The only thing holding us back from bringing more willing food packers was the limited supply of food. FMSC is at the end of their fiscal year and had to ration the amount we packed.

Grace member, Jessica Jacob was among those who packed meals on Saturday. She shared her story: I have been a bit stressed from work and life, and last week I prayed, ‘God, what is the plan, because I am not sure what to do anymore.’

Then Saturday came and we arrived at FMSC. I felt the blood pump through my veins when we watched the introductory video. Then laughter filled the room when our team packed meals together. I felt so ALIVE; to see the young and old working together to make a difference in someone else’s life was amazing!

Afterwards, we watched another video that showed the difference we are making in the lives of those who



Young and old packing food at Feed My Starving Children on Saturday, February 22

receive FMSC food. At that moment I realized that God has a plan for me. Serving in things like FMSC, SONday school, and choir fulfill me in ways that a job never can. I realized that I don’t have to travel to Tanzania to be in the mission field, I can serve in meaningful ways right in my community!

So on those days when I feel low, all I need to do is pray and seek out opportunities to serve the Lord and that refuels my spirit and soul.

Let’s continue to make a difference in this world by serving at Feed My Staving Children (FMSC) in 2009. We’ll pack meals that will be shipped around the world to hungry children while having fun with our church family and friends. Each serving opportunity is a two-hour shift at FMSC. We’ll meet at Grace one hour prior to the serving time so we can car pool together to Brooklyn Park.

Upcoming Servant Opportunities

Saturday, March 21, 7-9pm
 Saturday, April 4, 9-11am
 Sign up by calling the Grace office at 763-421-6520.

Special Note! Mark your calendar for November 20-21. Grace has booked the whole weekend with FMSC. We’ll send over 350 servants, with a goal of packing 120,000 meals!

“All” Church Cleanup

The Property Team and the Garden Team are teaming together to clean our church inside and out on Saturday, May 2, 8-11:30am. The “All” is for everyone willing to help make repairs inside and prune, divide perennials, and clean outside. Sign up by calling the office at 763-421-6520.

‘Think Green’ Garden Ministry

Been looking at seed catalogs? Itching to start spring cleaning? We’ve got a deal for you! The Garden Team will be pruning, cleaning and dividing our overgrown perennials and potting up the extras for a plant sale on Saturday, May 2 from 8-11:30am during the “All” Church Cleanup. If you have perennials you will be dividing, consider sharing with Grace. The money from the sale will be used for the gardens. Roll up your sleeves and join the fun!

“We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.”

II Corinthians 5:20

Care Ministry

Do you enjoy meeting people? Then let your warm smile and welcoming spirit bless others at Grace through Care Ministry.

The Care Ministry Team intentionally reaches out to welcome and encourage people who walk in our doors. This is an opportunity for you to be the hands and feet of God’s grace.

Learn more about Care Ministry Join us at our next team building session held Saturday, March 14, 10am–noon.

What happens in Care Ministry?

- ☞ You’ll serve with others on your Care Ministry Team to meet and welcome people in the church lobby.
- ☞ You’ll serve once a month on a Care Ministry Team at a worship service of your choice.
- ☞ You’ll arrive 15 minutes early and stay 15 minutes after that worship service.
- ☞ You are an ambassador, extending God’s grace to others!

Please join us on Saturday, March 14, 10am–noon for the Care Ministry Team Building Session!

Contact Jeannie Hellmann, jeannieh@graceandover.org

Additional serving opportunities are on page 12.

Thank you for Caring!

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone for the prayers, cards, food, memorials, and support given **to me during Jack’s illness and death.** I will be forever grateful. God bless you. *–Jan Galvin*

Thank you to everyone for taking a collection for our family. It will be very helpful at this time with all our expenses. This was a wonderful thing you did and very generous of everyone to give to people you **don’t even know.** We are especially thankful for all your prayers to help us get through this difficult time. With gratitude,
Mark, Michelle, Chris and Nicole Houston

First of all, thank you for your prayers. We appreciate the generous gift of money we received from the Noisy Offering. With both of us out of work right now, this is quite a blessing! *–Dale and Lori Lentz*

Dear Grace Quilters,
Thank you for the beautiful hand-made baby quilts that you donated to the Teen Pregnancy Program. It is so thoughtful of you to remember our young mothers and their babies. Because of your kindness and generosity they will truly know that they are ‘wrapped in God’s love’.
–Katie Eaton, Social Worker

Thank you and the other talented quilters at Grace Lutheran Church for the beautiful quilts. They are lovely and appreciated more than can be expressed. We love them and are putting them to good use. Thank you so much for thinking of us. Love,

Jenell, Steve, Jacob and Jennifer Crist (Hugo Tornado Victims)

Dear Grace Family,

On behalf of our family, I want to express a profound thanks for the beautiful floral arrangement you **gave for my mother’s funeral.** It meant so much to all of us to feel your love and support to us during this difficult time. We had just come in to see my mother for the first time and noticed the arrangement sitting there. It meant so much to us! These flowers meant that you were praying for us—asking for the Spirit to give us the peace we needed. It worked! We felt a comfort and peace beyond words. Thanks for your gentle presence!

–The Hellmann Family, Mark and Jeannie, Jan and Glenn



Lenten Journey: Then and Now

The 40 days of Lent are one of the most important times of the year for people of Grace. It is traditionally a period of meditation, prayer and spiritual renewal among intentional disciples of Jesus. It is a time to slow down and prayerfully reflect upon **the final portions of Jesus' life as he** approached the cross of Calvary.

This year our focus centers on our weekend worship as we reflect upon the richness of the Old Testament promises God made with his people: Noah, Abraham, Moses, and the Israelites as they wandered in the wilderness. Their stories will challenge us to consider that although God made promises of love, protection, and guidance back THEN, he still promises the same love, protection and guidance to us right NOW! Each worship service will be foundational step for Lent, provide a concrete Biblical lesson and inspire worship to help us prepare for Easter. In addition to weekend worship, we will offer Wednesday evening Holden Vesper Services at 7:00 p.m. featuring the popular *Nooma* teaching series by Rob Bell. These services are a great mid-week spiritual "shot-in-the-arm" for the whole family! Children (3 yrs.-5th grade) are invited to our Mid-Week Bible Club beginning at 6:30 p.m. Catechism students and parents are encouraged to share in this Lenten Journey together. It's a wonderful way for parents to model a deepening faith for their children!

In order to help people make mid-week worship a priority, Grace offers Lent Suppers from 5:30-6:30 p.m. The menus are tasty and served by Grace ministry teams. A freewill offering covers the costs.

Grace offers a daily devotional entitled: *A New Perspective—Reflections 2009* by Pastor Ryan Peterson of St. John Lutheran Church in Ellisville, Missouri. This is a wonderful way to set your mind on God's perspective each day as you journey through these 40 days of Lent. In addition, we are offering a brochure entitled *Keeping A Holy Lent* which explains what Lent is about, suggests how to observe it, and explains the important days of Holy Week such as Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Vigil. The Lenten devotional and brochure are available at Grand Central in the narthex at Grace.

One of the special Lent opportunities from last year will be offered again. Grace will host the ELCA Prayer Labyrinth on Saturdays from 1:00-4:00 p.m. through March. No appointment is needed.

A Prayer Labyrinth is one of the oldest contemplative and transformational tools known, having been used for hundreds of years for prayer, ritual, initiation, and spiritual growth.

Back in medieval times, prayer labyrinths were often viewed as



a journey to Jerusalem and were called Chemin de Jerusalem (Road of Jerusalem). They served as a spiritual pilgrimage for those who could not afford to travel to Jerusalem, the center of the world.

Lent is a journey of challenge—a challenge to grow in appreciation and thanksgiving for the steadfast love of God shown in the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we are asking everyone at Grace to consider the following:

- ☞ Read a devotional such as *A New Perspective—Reflections 2009*. Copies are available in the Grand Central area in the Narthex (lobby)
- ☞ Regularly attend weekend worship
- ☞ Join us for a Wednesday Lenten Supper at 5:30 p.m. through March
- ☞ Attend Wednesday Evening Vespers Services at 7:00 p.m.
- ☞ Travel the Prayer Labyrinth
- ☞ Choose an act of charity or sacrificial serving as an expression of honoring Christ's sacrifice and passion ■

Lenten Schedule

Lenten Meals
Wednesdays, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Meal Hosts
March 4: Greg & Jessica Jacobs
and Grace Staff

March 11: Senior High
March 18: Music Ministry
March 25: WOW
April 1: Graceful Seniors

Lenten Worship Services
Wednesdays, 7:00 p.m.
*Featuring the Holden Village Vespers
and powerful NOOMA videos.*

ELCA Prayer Labyrinth
Saturdays, 1:00-4:00 p.m.



Holy Week and Easter Schedule

Grace is offering many opportunities to celebrate the Victory of the Empty Tomb on Easter weekend, April 11-12. Once again, will have an Easter Vigil celebration on Saturday, **April 11 at 5:00 p.m.** This service has a special “flavor” of celebrating both Good Friday and Easter morning.

Easter morning will offer five celebration services on April 12. Special music and inspiring worship will be offered at all of our services.

Come and share how God will answer our prayer:
“Lord, Satisfy our Hunger” on Easter morning!



Palm Sunday
April 5, 8:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m.,
and 10:20 a.m.

Maundy Thursday
April 9, Meal, 5:30 p.m.
“Hungry for Forgiveness,”
Worship: 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday
April 10, 7:00 p.m.
“The Road to Calvary,”

Easter Vigil
Saturday, April 11,
5:00 p.m.

Easter
Sunday, April 12
Sunrise Worship,
6:15 a.m.
Traditional LBW Worship,
7:30 a.m.
Traditional Worship, 8:45 a.m.
Traditional Worship, 10:00 a.m.
Contemporary Worship, 11:15 a.m.

Easter Breakfast
7:00-10:00 a.m.
\$5/adult
\$3/ages 10 and under
\$20/family
*Sponsored by Sr. High Youth.
Proceeds offset Youth June
Mission Trip expenses.*

The Lenten Journey for Kids

Our Lenten journey continues Wednesdays through March. We will provide Lenten Suppers starting at 5:30 p.m. This is a great chance to connect with other families at Grace, and you don’t have to cook!

On Wednesday, March 4, children will begin in worship with their parents and will be dismissed from the worship center to have their own children’s sermon and activity.

On Wednesdays, March 11-April 1, children are invited Mid-Week Bible Club for a fun Lenten experience. Bible Club starts at 6:30 p.m. and children are invited to hear a Bible story, play games, sing songs and make a craft.

Children ages 3 years old through kindergarten will gather in the daycare playroom (room 110) at 6:30 p.m. Children ages 1st grade through 5th grade will gather in the naproom (room 111) at 6:30 p.m.

If you can’t make dinner don’t worry! Parents can enjoy Wednesday Lenten worship beginning at 7:00 p.m. and pick children up afterward. If you come to worship at 7:00 p.m., just drop you children off at the appropriate room.

We hope both you and your children have a wonderful Lenten experience! ■

ELCA Prayer Labyrinth at Grace during Lent

“I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being” (Ephesians 3:16).

What is a labyrinth?

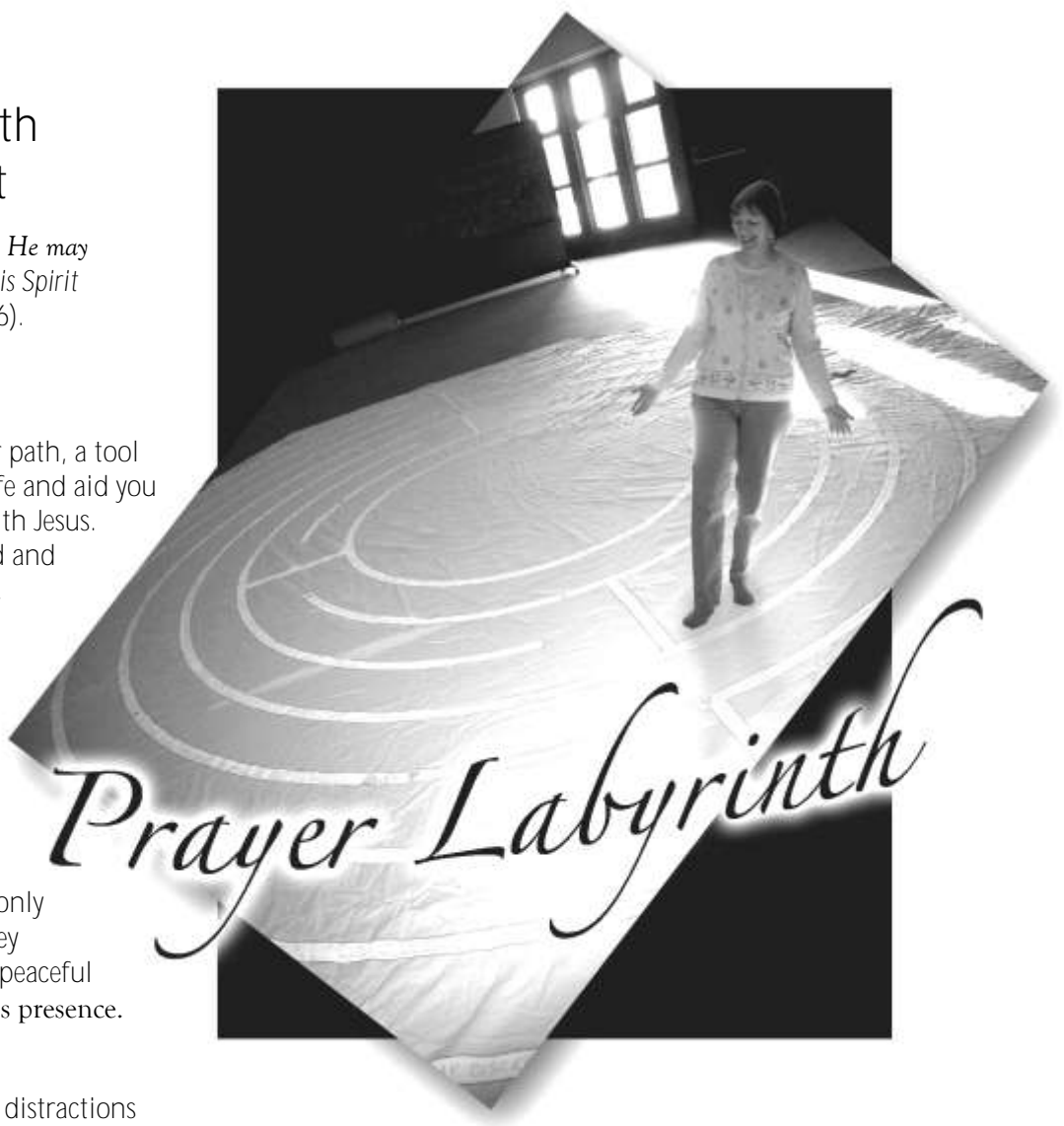
Simply put, a labyrinth is a prayer path, a tool which can enhance your prayer life and aid you in deepening your relationship with Jesus.

It is a means of quieting the mind and centering one’s thoughts on God.

Coupled with deepening your intention to be in the presence of God, it becomes a sacred space, a place of prayer and holy encounter. Labyrinths are ancient tools that have been adapted for Christians for meditation and prayer. They are universal in the way that there is only one path to the center. Rather they produce a calming, soothing and peaceful experience to draw you into God’s presence.

Walking through a labyrinth

- ☞ Relax and clear your mind of distractions and any expectations you may have
- ☞ Follow the path staying in the lines
- ☞ Listen to your heart
- ☞ Notice how you feel
- ☞ Walk at your own pace
- ☞ If others are present be attentive and considerate and step aside to meet or pass others
- ☞ Try walking with a prayer of gratitude, thought or question to God
- ☞ Linger in the center if you wish
- ☞ Retrace the path to the exit
- ☞ Every prayer walk is different and the effects may come to you along the journey or even weeks later



ELCA Prayer Path

This labyrinth we will be using was a project of the 2001 Youth Gathering in St. Paul. Youth and adults added their favorite Bible verses and thoughts to the fabric pathway.

Saturdays through March, 1:00-4:00 p.m.
Prayer Path takes about 30-40 minutes



Pastor Mark's Remarks

The Elaborate Family Bible



It never fails. I can be in a real “funk,” feeling overwhelmed and stressed to the max and then go to my Adult Bible Survey Course and get rejuvenated and energized.

Although the 20-plus people in the course are lots of fun and good friends, I don’t think it has much to do with the people. And I’m pretty sure that it doesn’t have to do with the teacher (that’s me, of course!) for I’ve known him for years! What I really think is the incredible impact that **God’s Word** has on me when I intentionally study it and appropriate its truth.

As we begin our Lenten Journey, it seems most appropriate during this time of special spiritual renewal that we challenge each other to grow in this area we often neglect—studying **God’s Word**, our sixth habit of effective disciples.

Pastor John Underhill of Valley Fourth Memorial Church in Spokane, Washington, writes about discovering the importance of the Bible in the life of a certain Christian lady: “In January, 1984, I was painting the home of an 89 year-old lady in Spokane. She had a large family Bible prominently displayed on the coffee table and remarked that this priceless heirloom was 116 years old. I commented on how remarkable that was, and added, ‘It doesn’t matter how old the Bible might be, what’s on the inside is what matters.’ She immediately replied, ‘Oh, I know. That sure is the truth. Why, we have family records and births and

marriages and deaths that go so far back, all recorded in that Bible; we could never replace them.’”

This story reminds me of a childhood friend whose elaborate family Bible was placed on the coffee table of his home. As long as I can remember, I didn’t see that the Bible opened, moved (except for dusting) or used in any way.

In conversations I’ve had with people over the years, they tell me the main reason why they don’t join a Bible study is a lack of knowledge. Although many want to learn more about it, there is a fear of being “called on” for an answer or feeling “lost” in a discussion; this hinders them from a class or learning event.

I find this most interesting. In our recent “REVEAL Spiritual Life Survey Report,” we discovered that the single most important “spiritual practice” that advanced a person’s spiritual growth is the “*Reflection and Study of Scripture.*” Unfortunately, the number of people at Grace who regularly read and study the Bible is considerably lower than the national average.

I wonder whether people truly believe that Scripture can impact and challenge a person to reach outside themselves to grow their faith. In addition, I wonder whether people think that the Bible is irrelevant to their lives today. Do people believe that “something written thousands of years ago has little or no impact on their lives in this modern world?”

If this is the case, then I invite you to our 2009 Lenten Journey: Then and

Now! Each weekend we will focus on an Old Testament story, explore the spiritual meaning, and how it surprisingly relates to our lives today. Some stories may be familiar; others may not. But as we look at Noah, Abraham, Moses, the Israelites, and Jeremiah, I promise that you will find fresh insights for today that will challenge you to grow.

During our Wednesday evening Vespers services, we will explore the thought-provoking Nooma DVD series by Pastor Rob Bell. Will you come and explore these titles with us?

Tomato: Where do we derive our “self-worth?”

Store: Living with Holy Discontent in our lives may lead us to make a difference in life!

Open: Does God answer prayer?

Name: Should we “compare and despair?”

Shells: Are we too busy? What are we really doing with our time?

So...crack open your Bibles! Get ready to study! No matter if you’re in a “funk,” feeling overwhelmed, or stressed to the max, come and get rejuvenated and energized! We’re going to grow our habit of study this Lent! ■

Excited to begin,
Pastor Mark

MARCH 2009						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1</p> <p>8:00 AM Traditional Worship 9:00 AM Sunday Morning Bible Study 9:00 AM Worship & SONday School/Club 45 10:20 AM Contemporary Worship 5:00 PM Sr. High Youth Group 5:00 PM Year of Discernment 6:30 PM Sunday Night Men's Group</p>	<p>2</p> <p>No School 6:30 AM Monday Morning Men's Group 6:30 PM First Place/Health 7:00 PM Vickie Meade's Small Group 7:00 PM Women's Monday Night Bible Study 8:00 PM Grace Music Academy</p>	<p>3</p> <p>No School 1:00 PM All Staff Meeting 2:00 PM Grace Music Academy 6:45 PM Men's Fraternity 7:00 PM Yoga Devotions</p>	<p>4</p> <p>No School 9:00 AM Quilters 12:00 PM Feed My Starving Children 1:00 PM Ruth Circle 5:30 PM Lenten Meal - Gracious Family 7:00 PM Worship 8:00 PM Choir Practice</p>	<p>5</p> <p>No School 7:30 PM Worship Team Practice</p>	<p>6</p> <p>No School</p>	<p>7</p> <p>7:30 AM Focus 2009 7:30 AM Men's Ministry Meeting 1:00 PM Prayer Labyrinth 5:00 PM Contemporary Worship & Camp SONshine</p>
<p>8</p> <p>Daylight Saving Time 8:00 AM Traditional Worship 9:00 AM Sunday Morning Bible Study 10:20 AM Contemporary Worship 5:00 PM Sr. High Youth Group 5:00 PM Year of Discernment 6:30 PM Sunday Night Men's Group</p>	<p>9</p> <p>8:30 AM Monday Morning Men's Group 4:00 PM Grace Music Academy 5:30 PM First Place/Health 7:00 PM Boy Scout Troop 414 7:00 PM Vickie Meade's Small Group 7:00 PM Women's Monday Night Bible Study 8:00 PM Grace Music Academy</p>	<p>10</p> <p>12:00 PM Program Staff Meeting 2:00 PM Grace Music Academy 6:45 PM Men's Fraternity 7:00 PM Yoga Devotions</p>	<p>11</p> <p>9:00 AM Quilters (Women on Wednesday) 4:00 PM Grace Music Academy 5:30 PM Lenten Meal - St. Hugh 5:30 PM Midweek Bible Club 7:00 PM Catechism 7:00 PM Worship 8:00 PM Choir Practice</p>	<p>12</p> <p>4:00 PM Grace Music Academy 6:00 PM Boy Scout Den 414 6:30 PM Rockin' Angels Children's Choir 7:00 PM Boy Scout Pack 414 Parent Meeting 7:00 PM VHS Ministry Team Meeting 7:30 PM Worship Team Practice</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p> <p>9:00 AM English Workshop 10:00 AM Care Ministry Training 12:00 PM Christmas Music Festival 1:00 PM Prayer Labyrinth 5:00 PM Contemporary Worship & Camp SONshine</p>
<p>15</p> <p>8:00 AM Traditional Worship 9:00 AM Sunday Morning Bible Study 9:00 AM Worship & SONday School/Club 45 10:20 AM Contemporary Worship 12:00 PM Grace Music Academy Board Meeting 5:00 PM Sr. High Youth Group 5:30 PM Family Table 6:30 PM Sunday Night Men's Group</p>	<p>16</p> <p>8:30 AM Monday Morning Men's Group 4:00 PM Grace Music Academy 5:30 PM First Place/Health 7:00 PM Boy Scout Troop 414 7:00 PM Vickie Meade's Small Group 7:00 PM Women's Monday Night Bible Study 8:00 PM Grace Music Academy</p>	<p>17</p> <p>8:00 AM Gracious Sabbath 2:00 PM Grace Music Academy 6:30 PM Vision Board 6:45 PM Men's Fraternity 7:00 PM Yoga Devotions</p>	<p>18</p> <p>9:00 AM Property Team Meeting 9:00 AM Quilters (Women on Wednesday) 4:00 PM Grace Music Academy 5:30 PM Lenten Meal - Music Ministry 5:30 PM Midweek Bible Club 7:00 PM Catechism 7:00 PM Worship 8:00 PM Choir Practice</p>	<p>19</p> <p>4:00 PM Grace Music Academy 6:30 PM Rockin' Angels Children's Choir 6:30 PM Scouting 7:30 PM Worship Team Practice</p>	<p>20</p> <p>5:30 PM Teacher Appreciation / Music Night</p>	<p>21</p> <p>11:00 AM Grace Music Academy Group Meetings 1:00 PM Prayer Labyrinth 5:00 PM Contemporary Worship & Camp SONshine 7:00 PM Feed My Starving Children</p>
<p>22</p> <p>Baptism 8:00 AM Traditional Worship 9:00 AM Sunday Morning Bible Study 9:00 AM Worship & SONday School/Club 45 10:20 AM Contemporary Worship 5:00 PM Sr. High Youth Group 6:30 PM Sunday Night Men's Group</p>	<p>23</p> <p>8:30 AM Monday Morning Men's Group 4:00 PM Grace Music Academy 5:30 PM First Place/Health 7:00 PM Boy Scout Troop 414 7:00 PM Vickie Meade's Small Group 7:00 PM Women's Monday Night Bible Study 8:00 PM Grace Music Academy</p>	<p>24</p> <p>12:00 PM Program Staff Meeting 2:00 PM Grace Music Academy 6:45 PM Men's Fraternity 7:00 PM Circle of Grace 7:00 PM Yoga Devotions</p>	<p>25</p> <p>9:00 AM Quilters 9:30 AM WOW (Women on Wednesday) 4:00 PM Grace Music Academy 5:30 PM Lenten Meal - WOW 6:30 PM Midweek Bible Club 7:00 PM Catechism 7:00 PM Worship 8:00 PM Choir Practice</p>	<p>26</p> <p>4:00 PM Grace Music Academy 6:00 PM Boy Scout Den 414 6:30 PM Rockin' Angels Children's Choir 7:00 PM Boy Scout Pack 414 Parent Meeting 7:30 PM Worship Team Practice</p>	<p>27</p> <p>7:00 PM Focus 2009 Stakeholders Meeting</p>	<p>28</p> <p>8:30 AM Focus 2009 Stakeholders Meeting 1:00 PM Prayer Labyrinth 5:00 PM Contemporary Worship & Camp SONshine 6:00 PM Boy Scout Pack 414 Contemporary</p>
<p>29</p> <p>8:00 AM Traditional Worship 9:00 AM Sunday Morning Bible Study 9:00 AM Worship & SONday School/Club 45 10:20 AM Contemporary worship 2:00 PM Eagle Scout Ceremony 5:00 PM Sr. High Youth Group 6:30 PM Sunday Night Men's Group</p>	<p>30</p> <p>8:30 AM Monday Morning Men's Group 4:00 PM Grace Music Academy 5:30 PM First Place/Health 7:00 PM Boy Scout Troop 414 7:00 PM Vickie Meade's Small Group 7:00 PM Women's Monday Night Bible Study 8:00 PM Grace Music Academy</p>	<p>31</p> <p>2:00 PM Grace Music Academy 6:45 PM Men's Fraternity 7:00 PM Yoga Devotions</p>	<p>1</p> <p>9:00 AM Quilters 9:30 AM WOW (Women on Wednesday) 1:00 PM Ruth Circle 4:00 PM Grace Music Academy 5:30 PM Lenten Meal - Gracious Family 6:30 PM Midweek Bible Club 7:00 PM Catechism 7:00 PM Worship 8:00 PM Choir Practice</p>	<p>2</p> <p>4:00 PM Grace Music Academy 6:30 PM Rockin' Angels Children's Choir 7:30 PM Worship Team Practice</p>	<p>3</p> <p>No School</p>	<p>4</p> <p>7:30 AM Men's Ministry Meeting 8:30 AM Focus 2009 Team Workshop 9:00 AM Feed My Starving Children 1:00 PM Prayer Labyrinth 5:00 PM Contemporary Worship & Camp SONshine</p>



Discipleship & Stewardship

Lent, a time of relinquishing and giving...up

“Maybe Lent is a good time to stop doing and try being.

... Relinquishment lies at the heart of the Christian gospel and is a countercultural choice that hones our discipleship.”

—Elizabeth J. Canham, founder of Stillpoint Ministries

We’ve been talking about ‘giving’ during February and now with the Lenten season upon us, we should be talking about ‘giving up!’ Lent is a unique time of year that gives us license to stop, breathe, take time, just be, and listen. But before we can do that, for most of us it means intentionally saying no and giving something up in our lives.

It might be our frantic schedule. It might be our faithful commitment to every single sports event little Susie or Johnny is in. It might be an over-the-top-afraid-I’ll-lose-my-job attitude to our work in this lay-off crazy world we find ourselves in. It might be our obsession with a particular TV show (or shows). It might be our fixation with spending hours on end in front of a computer screen as we search for some deal; connect on Facebook; or email jokes to friends and families! It might even be part of our daily routine that gets in the way of our faith walk. Or anything else that takes away from spending time with God.

It all begins with taking stock in where we’re currently at in our faith walk. How much time do we spend with God? Do we intentionally plan on spending time with Him? Do we hear from Him on a regular basis? Wouldn’t you like to do that? Just like

- Seven Habits of Effective Disciples
- Worshipping
- Serving
- Praying
- Giving
- Sharing My Faith
- Studying God’s Word**
- Building Vital Friendships

being more generous, I think we’d all genuinely like to spend more time with God. But, for many of us, we just don’t know where to start.

Here’s a good place to start—The Bible! How’s that for a novel concept. Bible reading is our habit of effective discipleship we’ll be focusing on during March. So as we give something up and free up some time, we could actually spend more time in God’s Word. In addition, studies show that reading the Bible is one of the primary ways we can accelerate our spiritual growth.

So, what are some next steps? Stay tuned for sermons and suggestions in the weeks ahead.

Following Jesus as a disciple of Grace



To get a head start, here are some starting points:

biblegateway.com

elca.org/What-We-Believe/The-Bible.aspx

rbc.org/index.aspx

Blessings as you begin, continue, or go deeper in reading the Bible and growing your faith...wherever you’re at on your journey of faith.

For His Kingdom,
Pastor Chris

P.S. Another great way to do your Bible reading is to find two other people you know to join you, meet every week for 30-60 minutes, and study God’s Word together! Sometimes, three is enough. ■

Children Ministries

The Grace Children's Ministry strives to partner with families as they lead children to KNOW God personally through Jesus Christ. To NURTURE children in their journey to follow Him. To CHANGE the lives of children by connecting them to Christ through worship, fellowship, discipleship and outreach. Contact Kim DeVries or Lisa Norbeck for more information at 763-421-6520.



Teacher Appreciation Movie Night

Fun for the entire family!
Teachers will be honored for their love and care for infants through 5th graders. Families are invited to a fun evening with popcorn and the movie: *Horton Hears A Who*. Friday, March 20 from 6:30-9pm.



Easter Egg Hunt
Children ages 3 years old through 5th grade are invited to an Easter egg hunt. Plus games, crafts, stories, and egg hunt. Saturday, April 11, 10am-noon.



VBS 2009: Studio GO! Game Show
Children ages 3 through 5th grade will learn about people of the Bible who teamed with God to GO for it! Cooper the dog makes a return!
June 15-19, 9:30am-noon.

Children's Birthday Schedule

Bring your pennies!
March 14-15: 3 years-K
March 21-22: 1st-3rd grades
March 28-29: 4th & 5th grades

Camp SONshine
Saturdays at 5pm for children ages 3 years old-third grade.

SONday School
Sundays at 9am and 10:20am for children ages 3 years old-3rd grade

No SONday School March 7-8 (Anoka-Hennepin school district spring break)

Club 45
Sundays at 9am and 10:20am for grades 4-5

Mid-Week Bible Club
Wednesday nights from 6:30-8pm
Children ages 3 years old-5th grade

First Communion Class
Pastor Mark and Kim lead a class for students ages 9 and up with their parents on Saturday, April 18 from 9am -noon. Students will learn about the Sacrament of Holy Communion and make banners that will decorate the Worship Center. Afterwards students are invited to receive their First Communion at the weekend worship services.

Bring a Bible and a smile!





A Place to Grow

Luther Dell...it's more than just a drive down a five-mile dirt road...so much more than a lake and a campfire and a carpetball table. It's a place to be a kid and be with friends. It's a place to open your eyes and look for Jesus all around you. It's a place to be washed over with wonder when you take a break from sprinting around the game fields and slowing down long enough to catch a glimpse of God with your heart. Luther Dell... it's a place to grow.

One of the biggest things that shaped my Christian faith and helped mold me into who I am today is summer Bible camp. I worshipped at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Spring Lake Park. They did not have a summer Bible camp, so my mom insisted that I go to camp with the church that was across the street from my house. I didn't want to go. I was scared. I didn't know anybody. I would be away from home for a whole week. But again my mother insisted that I go.

From the moment I stepped on the bus, I wasn't scared anymore. The people were so friendly and wonderful. When we got to camp, it was so different than I imagined it would be. It felt like I was right with God. Everywhere I looked, I

saw His creation, and it was magical, and it was so peaceful.

What I learned that first summer and many summers afterward was that God truly loves me for me. It wasn't because I was good at something, but despite all of my faults, He Loves Me.


You see, this was the first place that it truly sunk into my brain and my heart. It didn't matter who I was, what I looked like, who my friends were, if my family had a lot of money; or what society said, I was popular with God. He loves me for me.

I went to Sunday School and Catechism, but it was at this week-long summer camp that I truly felt the presence of God.

I am so glad that Grace partners with Luther Dell Camp and provides this experience for our youth. Luther Dell knows that no child should go without the experience of camp because of financial reasons. They provide scholarships. You just pay what you can afford.

Last year, I had the privilege to go to Luther Dell Camp with my daughters Megan, Emily, Cassie and I felt the same way about camp that I did when I was their ages.

I will be attending camp again this year with the youth from Grace, and I am so excited to see how God works through the wonderful staff to show God's love and compassion to children. Megan will be attending Luther Dell this year. Camp has had a big impact on her faith walk. She loves camp, and I am not sure that she



Baptism

The following entered God's kingdom through Holy Baptism:

Saturday, January 24
Madison Faith Warnke
daughter of
Christopher & Stacy Warnke
Christopher Warnke (adult)

Madisyn Alon Mevissen
daughter of Jason & Jamie Mevissen

Sunday, February 22
Paige Bailey Kirchner
daughter of
Mitch Kirchner & Stefanie Dunn

Baptism Workshop
The next baptism workshop will be held Sat, March 14, 9-11am.
Contact Lisa at 763-421-6520.

realizes how her faith is being nurtured there, but I do. I see a difference every year.

I hope that your children will join me for this amazing faith journey.

■
Lisa Norbeck,
Co-Director of Children's Ministry



Youth Ministries

For more information,
contact CT Harris 763-421-6520.

High & Middle School



Sunday Morning Bible Study
Students dive deeper into the Bible for large group discussion and interaction and then split up into age groups for a specific lesson. Sundays, 9-10am.

High School

High School Youth Group
Bible study, social opportunities and service events. Sundays, 5-7pm.

Middle School

Catechism (6-8th grade)

New curriculum: "Here We Stand"

Students spend a year learning about the significance of the Ten Commandments and the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. Numerous opportunities to grow through large group worship, small group discussions, Sunday morning Bible Study, Camp Wapo, The Quake, servant opportunities such as Feed My Starving Children and fun activities like parties and Movie Night. Wednesdays, 6:30-8pm.

Year of Discernment Gatherings

Monthly large group events that are led by CT and the older students in high school ministry for YOD students in their last year before confirmation.
Sunday, March 8, 5-7pm
Sunday, April 5, 5-7pm
Sunday, May 3, 5-7pm

2009 Confirmation Sunday

May 17, 2009 at 2pm (a second service may be added at 4pm)

Adult Ministries

For more information, contact the number provided or 763-421-6520.

Adult Groups

Sunday night, 7pm
Meets in homes every other Sunday
Led by Jason & Krista Dowdey
Graceful Seniors
A monthly fellowship gathering for Seniors. Meets the third Tuesday of each month at 8:30am at the Terrace Dining Room at the Farmstead. Contact Pastor Gene at 763-421-6520.

Women's Groups

Monday night, 7-8:30pm
Led by Chris Pace
Monday night, 7-8:30pm
Meets in homes
Led by Marilyn Soltis and Peg Brown
W.O.W. (Women on Wednesday)
Wednesdays, 9:30-11am
Childcare available for a small fee
Ruth Circle
First Wednesday of the month at 1pm

Men's Groups

Sunday night, 6:30-8pm
Led by Shawn Norbeck & Stephen Hirt
Monday morning, 6:30 am
Led by Thad Richardson
Men's Fraternity
This weekly program is a great opportunity for men of Grace and the community to fellowship and encourage one another as they learn to follow **Jesus into authentic manhood by God's design**. Take part in weekly teachings through a DVD series and small group discussion. Tuesdays, 6:45-8:30pm.
Cost: \$25. Visit: www.mensfraternity.com

Special Interest Groups

Grace Quilters
Join the laughter and camaraderie as we make beautiful quilts on Wednesdays at 9am. Quilts are donated to those in need.
Scrapbooking
A creative way to preserve your memories with others. Bring supplies and a discard bag. Optional-snack to share. Meets the third Thursday of each month, 6:30-9pm. Call Vickie to reserve your spot at 763-712-0496.
Yoga Devotions
Learn to quiet your mind and worship God while increasing flexibility. Tuesdays at 7-8:30pm. Contact Ellen, 763-783-5767.

Servant Opportunities

Continued from page 3

Family Table Meal

Serve a meal to those within the community the third Sunday of each month at 5:30pm. Sign up at Grand Central. Boxed meals are sent home with each family.
Donations needed: Canned tuna or chicken, boxed tuna or chicken meals, canned fruit or vegetables. Mark food or **monetary donations with "Family Table Ministry" and leave them at the Grace office.**

Our Savior's Homeless Shelter

Serve a meal the first Monday of each month at **Our Savior's Homeless Shelter**. Donations and servants needed.

Grace4Tanzania

Our mission team will be sending eight sewing machines to Tanzania. Donations are needed for sewing notions, pins, needles, scissors, thread, and sections of fabric three yards and larger.



Vision Board Summary

Our February Vision Board meeting focused on a Power Point presentation of the results of the Reveal Spiritual Life Survey. The presentation was given by Johnna Hirt, co-chairman of the Focus 20/20 team.

Reveal Spiritual Life Survey was used to classify spiritual growth along a continuum. Our goal was to determine where Grace members and attendees are in their spiritual growth and how to equip individuals for their spiritual journey.

The four categories of spiritual growth are **“Exploring Christ”, “Growing in Christ”, “Close to Christ” and “Christ-Centered”**.

- ☞ 75% of the participants were **“Exploring Christ” and “Growing in Christ”**
- ☞ 25% of the participants were **“Close to Christ” and “Christ-Centered”**

☞ Spiritual growth is dependent upon a **person’s relationship with Christ**

☞ Most participants were satisfied with **their spiritual growth and Grace’s** role in their growth

The three main catalysts for movement along the continuum are: 1) spiritual beliefs and attitudes; 2) church practices; and 3) spiritual practices.

Areas that Grace will focus on are relational connections through gift-based empowerment; worship services; and children/youth programming.

The Focus 20/20 team will present their findings to Grace members and attendees the evening of Friday, March 27.

On Saturday, March 28, we will invite the stakeholders to share their ideas of how to put our findings to use. We would like at least 75 people to attend these sessions.

Karen Erickson submitted the financial statement for January 2009.

Golden Rule Child Care Center has openings. The child care center has consolidated children into two rooms and has cut staff hours. Grace is discussing to lower the age of day care participants and allow non potty-trained toddlers to attend the child care center. This would increase attendance and income. An additional sink will be needed to accommodate this.

The Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly will be held on May 29-30. We are part of the Northwest Conference, and our assembly is on Sunday, March 15 at 2:00 p.m. at Word of Peace in Rogers. Two congregants are needed to represent Grace. ■

Reminder: Keep giving for mission needs **...but don’t forget our capital expenses!**

The Grace budget, as of a year ago, has mission investment needs and capital expenses separated out to accurately reflect the different expense areas. Mission investments include expenses such as: programs; staff; and other regular operating costs. Capital expenses cover the mortgage; building improvements; and any other costs related to the building and ongoing improvements.

For those of you giving to both, please continue making your contributions to both mission and capital. For those of you only giving to mission (regular operating costs), please consider giving also to capital needs as well, but **please don’t decrease your regular giving!** Rather, **pray** about giving above and beyond that amount for capital.

For the 2009 Grace budget, total mission investments are \$862,306 and total capital expenses are \$121,500.

Please remember our ongoing capital needs as well! ■

For questions, call Karen Erickson, Business Administrator at 763-421-6520 x102 or email karene@graceandover.org

Increase the Impact of your giving

Do you have an account with Thrivent? Did you know that you can increase the amount of your gift when you give to organizations such as: early childhood centers, elementary schools, high schools, post-secondary schools, outdoor ministry camps, campus ministries, social ministry organizations, and independent Lutheran organizations

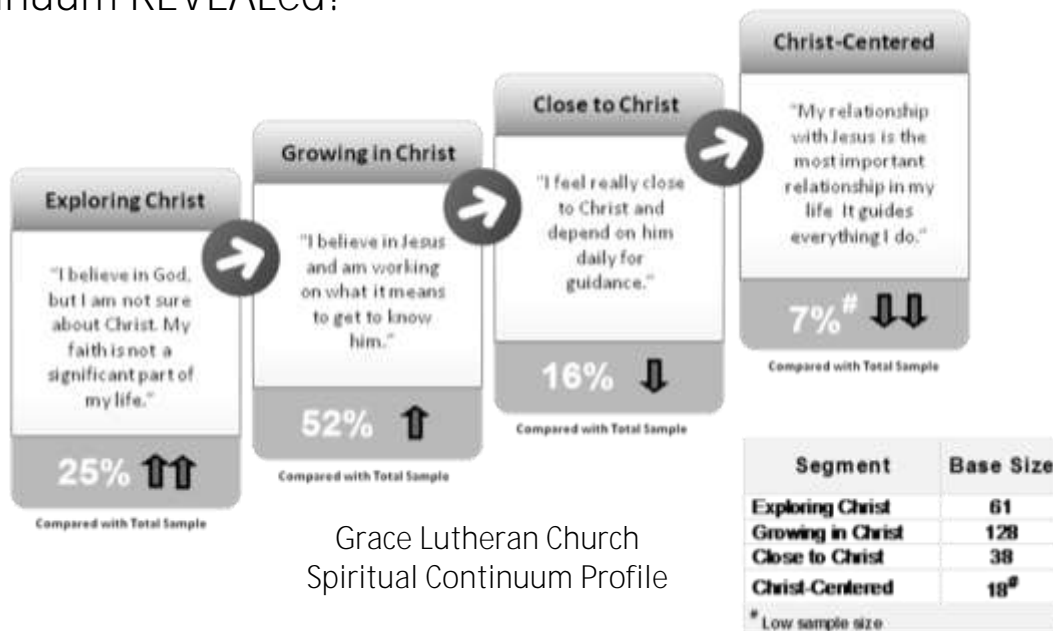
Thrivent has a program called *Giving Plus* in which they will add \$1 to every \$2 contributed to an enrolled organization, in accordance with their program guidelines.

To check to see if your favorite charity qualifies, contact your agent or go on line for details and the application form. Go to www.thrivent.com and click on Programs & Outreach, then *Giving Plus* program on the left hand menu. ■

Focus 20/20 Envisioning Process

Our Spiritual Continuum REVEALed!

Last fall Grace asked its congregation to take the REVEAL spiritual life survey, and almost 250 people generously gave their time to take the survey and provide us with invaluable input about how we can help each other grow spiritually. We are very grateful to those who participated.



Grace Lutheran Church
Spiritual Continuum Profile

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While the results are a wealth of information about who and where we are as a congregation, one very interesting aspect of the results was seeing where we fall on a spiritual continuum developed over the course of surveys of more than 500 churches. This continuum of development lets us see how we compare to other churches but more importantly provides a baseline that can help us measure our growth against ourselves.

Here's what the continuum seeks to tell us. It charts where survey respondents are in one of four stages of development as Christians (see diagram above):

Each box represents a category of development and the percentages

show how the people of Grace who took the survey fell into each category. The arrows show how we stack up to the sample as a whole. Upward arrows show that we are higher than the sample total, and downward arrows show we are lower. The number of arrows demonstrate the degree that we are out of sync with the total sample. For example the two arrows pointing upward in the "Exploring Christ" category show we have way more attenders in this category than the sample as a whole.

The results for Grace suggest that we have many opportunities to foster spiritual growth. We are more heavily represented in the first two areas and less well represented in the last two, the ones with the greatest spiritual maturity according to the survey. As the REVEAL authors noted, "we found much stronger beliefs, more

routine spiritual disciplines (e.g. daily Bible study), and greater frequencies of spiritual behaviors (like serving those in need) as people advanced from one segment to the next." In other words, the more we advance along the continuum, the better we can embody God's presence in our community.

From the standpoint of our Focus 20/20 effort, we are looking for ways to help people at Grace advance along the spiritual continuum. Providing the means to help the 77 percent of Grace in the first two categories grow and deepen their faith is a high priority for the church. The REVEAL tool also suggests catalysts that can help people advance along the continuum. We will be exploring some of these with you in the coming weeks as we continue to develop a vision that reflects God's plan for us at Grace. ■



Vision Board Insights

Show Me the Path that I May Take My Journey

Thanks to everyone who participated at the January Annual Meeting and added your voice to the process. After many months of trial and tribulation trying to figure out how to position Grace to survive from a business standpoint, we are finally putting much of that effort to rest. The reality of a budget plan is that we look ahead 12 months, and make the best predictions possible for the well-being of the congregation.

What about ten years from now? This, my friends, is a substantially more daunting process, and it is led by the Focus 20/20 Team. This envisioning process does not revolve around a budget plan, but focuses on building a strong spiritual foundation for our collective future.

The world is changing fast, and the role that Grace plays within our community, nation, and world is being defined. How will this envisioning process relate to each of us as disciples of Jesus? What gifts and resources has God given us to serve others? What areas do we need to grow and develop spiritually? And once we reach a point of spiritual maturity, how can we assist others as they grow as disciples of Jesus?

Answers to these questions about our spiritual growth are being developed right now. The next few months will be like the **climax to a great movie, and you won't want to miss it!**

There will opportunities to connect with the refinement of the Focus 20/20 envisioning process and build new roads to uncharted territory. The more we participate in the process, the more familiar this map will be to each of us, and the better we will understand our personal role. Striving to establish comfort and confidence with our spiritual development will breed contentment and hope regardless of what life throws at us.

Respectfully yours,
Jason Hoopman
 Vision Board President

“We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure.”
 Hebrews 6:11

Staff & Ministry Directory

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 Ext. 110 markh@graceandover.org
 Visitation Pastor Gene Heglund
 Lay Pastor of Discipleship
 & Stewardship Chris DeGraff
 Ext. 105 chrisd@graceandover.org
 Director of
 Small Groups Jeannie Hellmann
 Ext. 122 jeannieh@graceandover.org
 Director of Music & Worship. Scott Stivers
 Ext. 113 scottss@graceandover.org
 Co-Director of
Children's Ministries Lisa Norbeck
 Ext. 116 lisan@graceandover.org
 Interpreter Rebecca Rick

Co-Director of
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 Lila Woodruff
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 Golden Rule Day Care Jan Pariana
 763-421-1996

Grace Notes is a publication of Grace Lutheran Church. We welcome articles that encourage others and give example to God's work in our lives. E-mail stories to jenniferk@graceandover.org. All content is subject to editing.



Then and Now

Exploring the Old Testament promises that carry forward into the story of Jesus and continue to hold true today.

Lenten Journey
Weekend worship and
Wednesdays at 7pm through March

See pages 4-6 for details



Open your heart without opening your checkbook

Electronic Giving is an easy and secure way to make your regular contributions to Grace.

- No need to write checks or bring cash to church
- Peace-of-mind knowing that the church is receiving your contribution even if you are unable to attend
- More secure than checks
- All contributions are recorded for you on your bank statement with date of settlement
- *It costs you nothing!*

Sign up by calling 763-421-6520



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