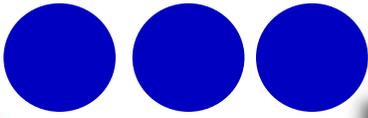


community matters



CHRISTMAS 2016 2ND AVE GROUP HOME



CHRISTMAS 2016 BAUER GROUP HOME



Every year, residents and businesses share holiday cheer with neighbors in need by participating in the Adopt-A-Home Program. Many of our individuals in service live off their social security budget each month, which is \$50. This money is often already stretched to its limits, and does not contain enough for buying Christmas presents. However, our individuals in service are some of the most deserving people during the holiday season. Each Individual in service submits their 'wish lists' for Christmas and finds hope on Christmas morning that they will receive something off their list. This year, we had all of our group homes, 84 individuals in service, adopted by different businesses and donors in the Rockford community. Our hearts are filled with joy that we could make each of our individuals in service Christmas wishes come true.



*pastor
dahlseng*

The End & Back Again: to the beginning

(journeying with Jesus in Mark's Gospel)

We just started the journey with Jesus through Mark's Gospel (on the week of January 15-21) so please pick up a copy at Grace and join the adventure! We do this work so that we can be on the same page as we commit ourselves to God's work in this community. Join a group, form a group or find a partner to read or at least discuss the questions. We learn more with others AND it helps us form a stronger community at

Grace.

Kingdom Math

I began introducing a simple way to keep some key concepts in our minds eye with the plan that we will put them into action in our daily life. This idea came to me several months ago as I began working on the study for Mark's Gospel:

+1 (every 1 matters to God: both those who know and love God and those who do not – all the same, we all matter to God. Jesus showed the love of God and invited people to follow him 1 at a time. Jesus sent his followers out to reach people with the good news of God's love 1 person at a time. This is where you and I come in: God wants us to share the love of Jesus with others – starting with just 1. The plus sign (+) is a reminder that we are doing Kingdom of God work as the sign is a cross by which we have been claimed by Christ. Who are you reaching out to with the love of Christ? Invite this person to come and join you in worship, to serve and to be part of this God movement.

2x2 (Jesus sent his disciples out into the world 2 by 2. They did not go alone. They offered prayer and mutual support to each other. It's more fun to go with someone else. In our world today, it is safer to go and serve, to meet a neighbor, to visit someone with a Christian friend. Oh, and the animals came on the ark 2 by 2!

3 Rules (are the Father, Son and Holy Spirit – these three persons in one God rule). God initiates, accompanies us as we go and works through us in the person of the Holy Spirit. BTW: we have talked about this in another way over the past few years: **3 Rules** = It all begins with God; **2x2** = God works through people; and, **+1** = It's all about relationships; with God and others.

Why does this matter? God loves the world and everyone in it and Jesus came to show his love by dying on the cross for our sin. Jesus wants everyone to know and experience his love and the new life he gives to us. People distant from God and his church will only know the love of Jesus if we share that message with them. We are stronger in our faith and following Jesus with our life daily as a church together than we are alone. As a church, we get stronger as we add **+1** new people to our community. 2017 is our year to begin to grow as a church as well as to grow younger. I am urging you as your pastor to join the movement and reach out - **+1**.

Generosity

Awesome! That is my response to the generosity expressed by the people of Grace in giving gifts to the intellectually disabled through the Lutheran ministry in Winnebago County called Mosaic! People of Grace provided Christmas gifts for the residents of both a women's and a men's home in our community. On top of that, the gloves taken in response to a need at Loves Park Elementary School was great. THANK YOU! You make me so proud!

February is a tough month for me... it is like the dregs at the bottom of the cup of coffee. You want that last sip to be so

good. It rarely is anything close to being good.

Somehow

the flavor is off and those couple of grounds just ruins it. February is the last dregs of winter. The fresh snow has all melted away and everything just looks dirty, grungy and dreary. I feel my hope flagging and my voice struggling to find the words to pray.

It is important for me to remember that hope is hardest to hold onto in those long moments just before the dawn. In the words of Moonface Martin, from the musical *Anything Goes*, "It is always darkest just before they turn on the lights." As we begin the season of Lent and lean forward towards Holy Week and the Three Days (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and the Vigil of Easter), I want to encourage you to

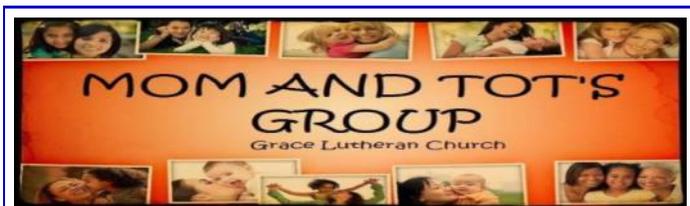
hold on to that hope. I want you to know that in those seemingly endless nights, the dawn will come. Jesus is here. God is with you.



Children & Family News



Christmas 2016
Grace Loves Park



January 25th – Snow
 February 8th – Groundhogs Day
 February 22nd – Valentine’s Day
 March 8th - Dr. Seuss’ Birthday
 March 22nd – St. Patrick’s Day

FAITH FIX BOX number 4 will be here on Sunday, February 5th! This is a 2-month box (February and March), filled with a ton of fun activities for ALL in the family! If your family is still wanting to sign-up for a box, please let the office know and we will get one made for you!

Grace Notes Schedule

Schedule through Mother’s Day. Palm Sunday and Mother’s Day performances.

Jan. 18	5:30-6:15pm	
Jan. 25	5:30-6:15pm	
Feb. 1	5:30-6:15pm	
Feb. 8	5:30-6:15pm	
Feb. 15	5:30-6:15pm	
Feb. 22	5:30-6:15pm	
March 1	5:30-6:00pm	BEGINNING OF LENT
March 8	NO REHEARSAL	
March 15	5:30-6:00pm	
March 22	5:30-6:00pm	
March 29	NO REHEARSAL	Spring Break
April 5	5:30-6:00pm	
April 9	10:00am Rehearsal/10:30 am Performance	
April 12	NO REHEARSAL	HOLY WEEK
April 19	5:30-6:15pm	
April 26	5:30-6:15pm	
May 3	5:30-6:15pm	
May 10	5:30-6:15pm	
May 14	10:00 am Rehearsal/10:30am Performance	

It's that time of year already! Registration for the 2017-2018 school year begins on January 31st. If you or someone you know has a 3 or 4 year old as of September 1st, give us a call for more information. We offer a part-time play-based, faith-based, loving preschool program that families have loved for more than 70 years.

Also coming up is our first (hopefully) annual Family Music Night. Everyone is welcome and we are looking for volunteers who play any instrument to demonstrate and/or play for us. We are looking forward to a fun, interactive, learning experience for everyone.

We have continued to enjoy every other week chapel, and plan to increase to every week starting in the fall. We are learning a song in Swahili (you can check out the video on our Facebook page) in honor of our visitor from Africa, Pastor Christopher. Our next chapel times are February 9th and 10th at 9 am if you'd like to join us.

For more information about either event, please call 815-282-6114 or email Stacie Leese at sleese@gracelutheranpreschool.com

Preschool News

thank you's

- Thank you to Austin and Brighton Young, Becki and Myka Morgan, Jeanette Moore, Liz Nethery, Jackie Van Horn, and Christy Jones for their help in the delivering of the Poinsettia plants to our homebound. From Marlys Nethery.
- I would like to send out this heartfelt thank you to all who helped make and serve the Carpenter's Place meal in December. Joy Swenson, Debi and Glen Venable, Jayne Workinger, Amanda Wallace, Pastor Brent Dahlseng, and Linda Baehr. The residents really enjoyed their Christmas lunch! Thank you again! From Angie Wallace.
- Thank you to the young lady that brought me the beautiful poinsettia plant. Bless you! From Ina Johnson.
- Dear Grace Lutheran, Thank you so much for the donation of hats and gloves. The students are so lucky to have the community support them. They love recess but often come without hats and gloves. They are so happy to keep a beautiful knitted hat. We appreciate your kindness. Thank you! From Rock Cut School - Mrs. Miller, nurse
- Thank you to Pastor Park and Pastor Dahlseng for their visits during the holiday season. I very much enjoyed them. Also, I would like to thank the church for the beautiful poinsettia that was delivered to my home. I appreciate the thoughtfulness. From Dorothy Rameczyk.



Join us for GAME NIGHT
 Sunday, February 26,
 2017
 5 - 7p.m.
 at St. Mark Lutheran
 675 N. Mulford Road

Middle and High School
 Youth and friends Invited!

If you have a favorite board game
 BRING IT!

Please let Pastor
 JoAnna know if
 you are interest-
 ed.

There will be a
 "chips buffet"

along with subs and soda.



Grace Loves Park Church
 343 Grand Ave. Loves Park

FREE!

Admission

SATURDAY, MARCH 18th 6:00PM-8:00PM

Bringing household games to life!

JENGA * SORRY * BOGGLE * GESTURES * YAHTZEE BOWLING *

TWISTER * MONOPOLY * AND MORE...

DON'T FORGET THE COMMERCIAL BREAK GAMES!

LOADED NACHOS

Call with questions BRING A SNACK TO PASS

815-633-8075





**Pastoral Acts
December 2016**

Funeral
Michael Brown
Linda Schuepbach

**General Fund (Mission and Ministry)
End of Year 2016**

General Fund Income

Budget: \$678,501.50

Actual: \$668,611.06

General Fund Expenditures

Budget: \$678,501.50

Actual: \$677,807.79

Rebuilding Grace

Income: \$133,469.51

Expenditures: \$132,986.18

Thank you for your giving hearts.

Mary Frykman

Check out electronic giving and make a contribution. We are also accepting Credit Card donations

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 3-Ronald Granath - 85
- 7-Deloris Olson- 81
- 8-Corinne Bartels - 83
- 9 - Robert Newcomb - 75
- 10-Jane Carlson-81
- 10-Lavonne Schutt - 86
- 13-Beverly Beck - 83
- 20-Mary Galler - 90
- 21-Joyce Schoenfield-78
- 29-Edith Bevan - 97



STAFF BIRTHDAYS

- 15-Rachel Hall, Wedding Coordinator

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 11- Hugh & Dianne Bourkland - 63rd
- 27- Gary & Janice Gullikson—52nd



STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

- 20 - Aaron and Melissa Fleming

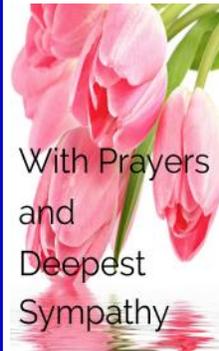
Birthdays that are published are 75 and older. Anniversaries that are published are 25th, 40th, 50th, and any Anniversary after the 50th. If you wish not to have it published please call the office (815-633-8075).

We extended our Sympathy to:

Chris Gould and family on the death of his mother.

To Leanne Hargraves and family on the death of her sister, Connie Lynch.

To the family of Edward Weiss.



With Prayers
and
Deepest
Sympathy

The next newsletter will be published on **Friday, February 17, 2017** and mailed out **Tuesday, February 21, 2017** Items for that issue (March Calendar) are due in the church office by

NOON, Friday, February 10, 2017.

PLEASE NOTIFY THE CHURCH OFFICE

**...when members of your family are hospitalized so the pastors may visit them.
(Also let the hospital know you are with Grace Lutheran Church)**

...when a member of your family has passed away so the pastors and members of the congregation may express their sympathy and include you in their prayers.



Grace Loves Park Church and Preschool
343 Grand Avenue
Loves Park, IL 61111

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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Phone: 815-633-8075
Fax: 815-633-8092
Email: grace@gracelovespark.org



**Confirmation Camp
At Lutherdale
June 25-30**

**Youth Mission Trip
Rockford, IL
July 23-28**

**Please see Pastor JoAnna Patterson for more
information**

Worship
Opportunities
at Grace every
Sunday

7:30 a.m.
*Weekly
Communion
Worship*

9:00 a.m.
*Traditional
Worship*

10:30 a.m.
*Contemporary
Worship*

*1st & 3rd Sunday,
Holy Communion
at
9 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.*