

community matters



*Thank you all for making our
Advent and Christmas
season such a blessing!*



What is your quest?

During one of the many funeral planning meetings with families, one member of a family identified himself as "spiritual but not religious (SBNR)". A Google search on the word "spirituality" resulted in 177 million links! I want to give a shout out to all the SBNR's because you are (1) looking for a connection beyond yourself, and (2) do not want to just go through the motions of a church service!

As a spiritual person and one who has been on this quest for long stretches of my life, here are a few thoughts. Obviously, you need to find what works for you. It is always wise to start with a spirituality that is familiar to you rather than starting from scratch. If you or your family has some Christian roots, start fresh and begin to learn and practice what Jesus taught and practiced. I find the gospel of Luke to be a good gospel to search out Jesus' teachings on life and spiritual practices. *The Message Bible* offers an easy to understand version of the Bible.

How do you experience God in your life? Here are four suggestions I have found as I practice the presence of God. My first suggestion I mentioned above about finding a spiritual teacher like Jesus, a copy of the teachings and practices of this person in an understandable version and learn as you read and put it into practice in your life. While you can do this on your own, just know there are people who have long been practicing a variety of faiths in our community and you can find a practitioner who can help you.

A second suggestion is to begin to pray – to call upon God in prayer. In Christian spirituality, we often call upon God in the name and spirit of Jesus. Prayer is relational and at its best it is two way communication. On the one hand, as the person speaking, consider offering God thanks for your life, health, family, job, daily needs met, etc. Secondly, bring your requests to God for others, for our community, for our world and for yourself. On the other hand, seeking the presence of God implies a willingness to listen for God's voice. "Lord speak to me, guide my day, or use me." Do not be surprised if God speaks to you through a thought, another person, a circumstance, a dream or even an audible voice. Is this word consistent with how you understand God? Warning: if this word is harmful to you or others, this is NOT God!

A third suggestion is to begin serving other people as you see needs arise. As a spirituality based around the love of God and the love of people, Jesus is all over serving people in a spirit of love. When we try to be helpful for people, we experience a real peace and joy that fills our soul. This is what I would call spirituality in action! Try it out.

A final suggestion is look for a faith community – others who are seeking the presence of God and working to serve our community for good and for God. While this may raise the "religion" flag for some of you, there are honestly many churches that love God and this community and are working to make a difference. No person, family, organization or church is perfect because we are all people. Yet where would we be if it were not for other people – we add color and texture to each other's lives. I think it is worth the risk to find a faith community and begin to seek the presence of God together as you join the movement to serve this community in God's name.

Can we go it alone in a quest to be spiritual? For a time, yes. My question is "why?" Am I honestly going to discover something in spirituality that no one has ever found? Likely not. In fact, I do not have time to start surfing through all 27 million links of a Google search. More importantly, I want to connect with God now not at the end of my five year search!

God bless you on your quest! If anyone at Grace Church can be of assistance, let us know!



pastor
dahlseng

Pastor Dahlseng

Children and
family news

Moms & Tots

Here are the upcoming Moms & Tots Playgroups.
We meet every other Wednesday from 9:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 31st — Groundhogs Day

Wednesday, Feb. 14th — Valentine's Day

Wednesday, Feb. 28th — Mardi Gras Party

Wednesday, March 14th — Spring Fever

Saturday, Feb. 24th — Mom's Night Out @ Lucha Cantina, 6:00 p.m.

Vacation Bible School and Fine Arts Camp Save the Dates!!

Our VBS will be June 11-15, 2018. We hope you can join us for a FUN-filled week!! Our Fine Arts Camp will be July 9-13, 2018.

If you are interested in volunteering, please call the church office.

VBS 18



Grace Kids Spring Musical

Informational meeting for parents and kids will be on Sunday, February 4th at
10:00am in Founder's Hall

Rehearsals begin Wednesday, March 7th from 5:00-6:00pm

Performance on Saturday, May 12th

All kids 3 years old - 6th Grade
are welcome to join!

See Jody Dahlseng 📞 Amanda Monroe
for more information

Grace Youth
news

Grace Youth (9th-12th):

Feb 11th at 6:45 PM, meet at church to get a ride to Katie's Cup for Games, Coffee and Worship. We will be joined by youth from Lutheran churches all over Rockford! Please RSVP with Pastor JoAnna.



Grace Youth (7th-12th): Winter Lock-In!

Feb. 2nd at 7PM. Games, Fun, Worship, and food! Please bring a snack to share or a drink to share! Friends are welcome. Please know that bed time is at 1:00 AM.

Preschool
Registration



Preschool
news

Preschool Registration for 2018-2019

Registration for the 2018-2019 school year has begun! If you know of a 2, 3, or 4 year old who needs part-time preschool, please give us a call. We have morning and afternoon options. Classes are going to fill quickly this year so get in soon.

Visit our website at www.gracepreschool.net or find us on Facebook for more details!

We are planning a "Sweetheart Dinner" for families on February 24th. This will be a fundraiser for the school. We will serve spaghetti dinner and ice cream sundaes, there will be prize baskets (donations appreciated), and we will have some activities and games.

Everyone is welcome to join us. Tickets are \$5 per person, available at the welcome center or call the school at 815-282-6114.



thank you's

- Ina Johnson, thank you for the lovely poinsettia and to Pastor Park for your visits.
- Carpenter's Place, thank you to Angie Wallace and Grace Loves Park for being a part of CP's 12 Days of Christmas. Your gifts helped make Christmas a little more special for our guests. Thank you, also, for the generous donations of personal care items that help rebuild lives and begin new positive chapters. Finally, thank you for the generous financial contribution that will make a significant impact on the lives of our guests. Thank you for caring for the homeless, hurting of our community.
- Helen Schultz, thank you for the beautiful poinsettia plant.
- Lisa Clark and Loves Park Elementary staff, thank you so much for donating socks, underwear and hats to the students at our school. We truly appreciate your support!
- The family of Betty Torsrud, thank you for the beautiful plant.
- Beverly Farr, thank you to Grace Loves Park for the beautiful poinsettia and also to the lovely lady that delivered it to me in the extremely cold weather.
- Marlys Nethery, thank you to Lloyd & Marge Rhodes, Austin & Brighton Young, Becki & Myka Morgan, Kristie Jones, Jeanette Moore, Cher Hoekstra, and Pat Hale for their help in the delivering of the poinsettias to our shut-in members.
- Norma Peterson, thank you to Pastor Dahlseng and Gloria Lynn for the beautiful service for Hugo. Also, I appreciate the lily from the Council and Congregation, Sheri Cannell for the lunch preparation and the ladies serving. It was all very nice.
- MOSAIC and Tricia Sweeney, on behalf of the people with intellectual disabilities that we serve at MOSAIC, thank you for your generous donations of gifts. It is because of you that our people enjoyed opening gifts on Christmas morning!
- Rock Cut School, Thank you to Grace Congregation for the awesome donation of hats, gloves, t-shirts, socks and underwear for our students. We are very appreciative of this donation!
- Rockford Rescue Mission, thank you to Sheri Cannell and Grace Loves Park for sharing with our Mission family at the Sunday Evening Chapel/Meal Service. May God bless each one who helped in some way to make your ministry happen.
- Marion Medical Mission, thank you to Grace Loves Park and Michael & Kathleen Crandall for the new shallow well installed in the village of Mwayipopo, Malawi that will serve 35 people!

NIS Women of the ELCA Spring Retreat April 28, 2018

Mark your calendars for the Northern Illinois
Synod Women of the ELCA
Spring 2018 Retreat
Saturday, April 28, 2018
at LOMC, Oregon, IL

"HERstory—A String of Pearls"
Bible Study led by Susan Ekstrand
Pastor Diane Dardon will lead the worship
Partnership Reports on Rocky Boy
Indian Reservation by Louise Owen

Watch for more information...

Lenten Worship

Please join us starting February 14th for
our Midweek Lenten worship services.

New Service Times:

12:15 p.m. and 6:20 p.m. (Evening meals start
February 21st at 5:30 p.m.)

Worship Theme:

What does it mean to be a Jesus
Follower today?

Sunday Worship Services

Worship Theme:

Flipping the Script, One Relationship at a Time.



We Extended our Sympathy to:
 To the Family of Shirley Olson.
 To Ronald and family on the death of his wife, Linda Johnson.
 To Jeff and Krista McCauley and family on the death of Jeff's sister Vicki Lawrence.
 To Diane Carlson and family on the death of her son Scott Carlson.



Pastoral Acts for December

Baptisms
 Christian Swain

Funerals
 Shirley Olson
 Linda Johnson
 Hugo Peterson

**General Fund (Mission and Ministry)
 2017 Offerings and Expenditures**

General Fund
 Income: \$716,475.09
 Expenses: \$701,932.13
 End of Year Balance: \$47,184.02

Rebuilding Grace
 Income: \$99,781.61
 Expenses: \$102,443.04
 End of Year Balance: \$75,775.02

*Thank you for your giving hearts that helped us finish the year on a positive note. With your generosity, we were able to meet our budget goal in 2017. Together we are making a difference.
 ~ Mary Frykman*

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

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS
 3—Ronald Granath—86
 3—Marion Newcomb—75
 7—Deloris Olson—82
 8—Corinne Bartels—84
 9—Robert Newcomb—76
 10—Jane Carlson—82
 13—Beverly Beck—84
 13—Lena Kiikka—100
 20—Mary Galler—91
 21—Joyce Schoenfield—79
 29—Edith Bevan—98

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES
 11—Hugh & Dianne Bourkland—64th
 27—Gary & Janice Gullikson—53rd

STAFF BIRTHDAYS
 February 9—Lori Boeke—Grace Preschool
 February 15—Rachel Hall

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).

The next newsletter will be published on **Friday, February 23, 2018** and mailed out **Tuesday, February 27, 2018**. Items for that issue (March Calendar) are due in the church office by **NOON, Friday, February 16, 2018**.

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
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Loves Park, IL 61111

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

Upcoming Events at Grace

GRACE'S



**GAME
NIGHT**

Saturday, February 10th from 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Great food!!

Family Fun Game of Family Feud

Other fun games throughout the night!

Bring your favorite snack to pass!

Please RSVP by Sunday, Feb. 4th on the Connection Card in your bulletin
or by calling 815-633-8075.

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.*