



**GRACE**  
**LUTHERAN CHURCH**

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# Grace *for* Today

FEBRUARY 2020 • VOLUME 19, NO. 2

## **SEEING LENT AS A JOURNEY.....by Pastor Ken Gibson**

*“Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan (river) and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil.”*

The statement above points us back to the first Lent when Jesus went into the wilderness alone and began to prepare himself for the ministry that awaited. Jesus began his ministry and, as we know, made the journey that lead him to the cross.

In keeping with that thought, I would like us to consider our journey through Lent. The beauty of the church calendar is that it is ever inviting us to take part in the process. It may seem like we just finished Advent, Christmas and are welcoming the light of Epiphany (and, of course, that’s true), but very quickly we are invited to consider a Lenten journey, a time of prayer and deep reflection, a time for listening to God and giving ourselves over to some God time, some silent time.

Ask yourself; *“When was the last time I was able to sit and pray in silence? When was it that I last prayed to God? When is it that I pause for a specific time and put everything else aside and just prayed? When was my last alone time with God?”*

During the upcoming season of Lent, we will once again offer mid-week Lenten services at 12:00 p.m. and this year starting at 6:30 p.m. each Wednesday. These offerings are outside of our weekly Sunday offerings, and I encourage you to attend as many of these Wednesday offerings as you are able. Although we only offered the Holden Evening Prayer one time this past Advent, we will be offering these each Wednesday during Lent with a focus on the following text from Philippians 2:5-11.

*Philippians 2:5-11*

*5 Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, 7 but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, 8 he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

This text and what we will offer each week in Lent will guide us to the place Jesus is headed. We will journey to Holy week and recall the revelation of God’s never-ending grace as Jesus empties himself and becomes obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

Our salvation is reveled to us in this salvific act. In response to this gift, I ask you, again, to consider seeing Lent as a journey of reflection into what the first Lent and the first Holy Week mean for you.

**ANNUAL MEETING-** Be sure to save date of **February 16<sup>th</sup>** for the Annual Meeting following the 10:45 a.m. service at 12:05 P.M. Annual reports will be e-mailed and available at the Information Center as of January 31<sup>st</sup>.

**SOUPER BOWL OF CARING-** On Super Bowl Weekend, **February 1st and 2nd**, Grace's Youth Group will be collecting \$ in soup kettles as a part of the nationwide youth group effort to gather donations for hungry people. Coins, bills, checks are all welcome to make a joyful noise and donation to ELCA World Hunger after worship.

**BUDGET REVIEW-** Please join us for an Adult Forum on **February 9<sup>th</sup>**, 9:45 A.M. in Luther Hall where we will have a Budget Review. We will look over the upcoming budget in preparation for the Annual Meeting.

**PRAYERS-***Please lift up these petitions in your prayers—To become a praying member of the Friends in Prayer, please submit name and e-mail address to [dklabunde@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:dklabunde@gracewoodstock.org).*

**World:** Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, churchwide staff & their families, Bishop Jeff Clements, synod staff & their families, those serving in military conflicts, Arusha Town Lutheran Parish in Tanzania (our companion parish), Scott Bunch serving in the military.

**Woodstock:** Pastor Ken Gibson & his family; Pastor Amanda Bergstrom & her family; Grace Staff; Grace Council

**Health Concerns:** Charlie Bell (friend of Jamielynn Wedoff), Rev. Jim Berg (friend of Marlene Botts), Shirley Berna, Lois Bloese, Angela Boe (friend of Hanlin Family), Mary Sue Boerner (friend of Paul Lockwood & Diane Baker-Lockwood), Dee Bohn, David Brugger (friend of Shirley Busse & cousin of Marge Birk), Myron Callihan (brother of Susan Payton), Jim Davis, Nancy Davis, Lori Dechant, Patrice Dunn, Russ Freeman, Robert Giron (brother of Patty Kozlow), Tom Goggin, Becca Guenther (niece of Gretchen & Claude Hutchens), Tamasa Gutierrez (mother of Patty Kozlow), Jace Hanlin, Sue Hanson-Smith (friend of Barb Aavang), Liz Henniges (wife of Al Henniges), Steve Kosmen (loved one of the Koehn family), Elayna Kuipers (friend of the Wedoff Family), Anna Larsen (sister of Al Henniges), Elizabeth Lynd Loser, Amanda McNally (grandniece of Diane Baker-Lockwood), Dick McNally, Sarah McAllister (friend of Lauren Kleinjan), Karen Millman, Tammy Millman (daughter of Karen Millman), Kem Moran (friend of Barb Aavang), Collene Nelsen (cousin of Debbi Lynd), Gloria Ogle, Andrea Paetsch (aunt of Debbi Lynd), Linda Page (friend of Joe Evanoff), Georgia Petersdorf (sister-in-law of Gladys Renner), Pat Peterson, June Peterson, Bruce Randolph (husband of Ila Randolph), Carol Rank, Shawn Rank (son of Carol Rank), Barbara Readel, Sheila Readel, Jayne Reicher (great niece of Barb & Wayne Japp), Herb & Bev Renner (brother & sister in law of Ken & Gladys Renner), Jessie & Sue Robertson (friends of Ron, Mary & Kimberly Koehn), Nicholas Ruffino (brother of Nathan Ruffino), Joan Russell (mother of Sheri Conover), John Rust (Aavang family friend), Michael Schnepf (nephew of Sue & Terry Aavang), Colton Sciluffo (infant son of a friend of Joy Oberman), Eleanor Setser, Elsie Stoddard, Andrea Strayer (mother of Lisa Wahkowiak), Ginny Stroh (mother of Fay Wilson), Dave Sundby (brother-in-law of Deborrah Evanoff), Samuel Sweeney (nephew of Melissa McMahan), Josh Tillman, Brian Tobin (grandson of Enn Teetsov), Bev Visconti, Gino Visconti, Addie Jo Wedoff, Esther Wienke, Bud Winter, Marilyn Zaranto (friend of Marge Birk), Ruth Zirves

**Sorrow:** Evelyn Schroeder (grandmother of Bryant Williams), Ralph Westman (grandfather of Zack & Nick Olsen)

If you wish to add a prayer request for the newsletter, please call the church office at 815-338-0554. Your prayer concern will run for one week and may be renewed. Submissions to the *Friends in Prayer* e-mail and phone teams may also be submitted by telephone to the church office or by e-mail to [Gracewoodstock.org](mailto:Gracewoodstock.org). Due to confidentiality laws, hospitals no longer notify churches or pastors when a member is hospitalized. If you or a member of your family have a medical procedure planned or is admitted to the hospital, please call the church office.

**MONTHLY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE-**The deadline for the March newsletter is **February 15**. Please send articles to Lauren Kleinjan at [kleinjan@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:kleinjan@gracewoodstock.org), or the church office. Questions: Call the office at 815-338-0554.

## **PRAYERS.....by Pastor Amanda**

Last year I took an online class exploring Celtic Spirituality: Experiencing God in the Everyday, where I studied and wrote different kinds of prayers as a part of the course. One of the prayer types is called the “Long, Wandering Prayer” a recognition of an ongoing and unending conversation with God, praying as one goes.

Someone once told me that prayers do not only consist of the words between “Dear God” and “Amen,” so I already had a strong connection to this “Long, Wandering Prayer” as the ongoing conversation one has with God. I trust that God hears my prayers and ongoing thoughts, and that the Spirit indeed intercedes for us when we cannot find the words to pray. Even still, in the task of writing a “Long, Wandering Prayer” I felt a renewed awareness of God’s presence.

The assignment was to write a prayer for a journey you take regularly - your morning routine, or your commute to work, your typical route to the grocery store, or a walking path you frequent. Then you write down some words as a prayer for that journey. The format may wander, the prayer may feel long; yet the practice invited me to pay closer attention to a particular part of my day that can otherwise fall into unnoticed routine.

This February, I invite you to try praying in a new way and see how you too might experience a renewed awareness of God’s presence. Perhaps you’ll try writing your own “long, wandering prayer” for a habitual part of your daily journey. Maybe you’ll try praying at a different time of day than you usually do. Maybe you’ll pray the Lord’s Prayer on the weekdays in addition to during worship. Maybe you don’t usually pray at all and will give it a try sometime this month, for there is no right or wrong way to pray to God.

I hope that this faith practice of prayer may be a source of strength and renewal to you. Thanks be to God who is always with us on the long, wandering journey of life; may God’s presence continue to be revealed to you.

**BULLETIN & PRESENCE LIGHT SPONSORS**– Our 2020 **Bulletin & Presence Light** sponsor sheets are available in the green binder at the Welcome Center. A month prior to your sponsoring, a form will be sent to you requesting information and a donation of \$20 for the Bulletins & \$10 for the Presence Light. Thank you for helping us fund the weekly bulletins and presence lights.

**PRIMETIME MEAL TEAMS NEEDED**– We currently have the following dates open in our PrimeTime meal schedule: February 19, March 4 and March 11. If you can give a helping a hand on Wednesday evenings to join a meal team, please contact Jen Freeman at [jfreeman@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:jfreeman@gracewoodstock.org).

**BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS**– Save the date! Nancy Kreznor will be providing free blood pressure checks between services on **February 23rd**.

**CHILI FEST**- You are invited to Chili Fest following the Transfiguration Dixieland Jazz worship services on **February 23**. Please sign up on the Activity Board and note if you’ll be bringing chili or cornbread. We will share in a friendly chili fest competition, share a good meal & fellowship, and there will be raffle baskets to raise funds for the High School Youth Group’s summer trips ([Ignite: Synod Youth Gathering in 2020](#), and [Boundless: ELCA Youth Gathering in 2021](#)). We hope to see you there!

**SENIOR LUNCHEON-** Come join us on **February 25th** for a Mardi Gras Party by wearing purple, green and gold! Our Mardi Gras' menu starts off with a Purple, Green & Gold Salad, followed by our southern entrée of Creamed Shrimp & Chicken over buttermilk biscuits, and Rosemary Green Bean. For dessert, we are baking up the traditional King Cake, complete with baby inside. Will you be the lucky person to get it? Learn about some of the traditions of Mardi Gras as we celebrate together. Please be sure to sign up in the Activity Binder by February 23. If you have an questions, please call Shirley Busse at 815-338-9063.



**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL-** It's never too early to start thinking about summer! Vacation Bible school will be held July 13th-17th from 9:00 A.M.—12:00 P.M. Please watch for future announcements about how to share your time, talents or donations for this very important part of our Education Ministry.

**SUNDAY BOOK CLUB-** Sunday Book Club meets between services in room 102 and is continuing with the book "7 Great Women". On February 2 and 9, we will read and discuss Hannah More and February 16 and 23 will be on Saint Maria of Paris. Come and learn about these great Women! Coffee and homemade treats provided along with a lively discussion. If you have any questions, please call Shirley Busse at 815-338-9063.

**CONFIRMATION CORNER**

*An update on what's happening in our confirmation program.*

This little confirmation corner we hope will serve as a way to keep the congregation up to date with all the events and learnings that are happening in our Grace confirmation ministry.

Currently we are in a **Bible Study year of learning**. We have completed a lesson on the psalms and are now heading into the New Testament. Lessons this month will include; The New Covenant, Intro to the NT; God comes to Earth, a look at the birth narratives in scripture; How shall we be judged, Sheep and goats.

- **CRANDALLS CHICKEN DINNER!!!** Make plans to join us at our Chicken Dinner on **February 17<sup>th</sup>** from 4-8 P.M. Be a winner eat a chicken dinner and support our confirmation youth as they head to Lutherdale Bible camp this summer. **Tickets** are available from all confirmation youth, at the church office or at the door. They will also be sold before and after services on February 2nd and 9th. **Tickets are \$15. For Adults Kids 3-11 \$10. And under 3 free.** Exact change or personal checks made out to Grace Lutheran Church would be greatly appreciated!
- **VALENTINES FOR SHUT-INS** - We will once again be making Valentines cards for our members and friends who are unable to be out as often as they might like to be. If you have a need for a handmade Valentine's day card, for someone you know who is in need, contact a confirmation youth or Jen Freeman and we will get one made for you.
- As lent approaches we will be attending the Mid-week Lenten services which this Lent will be the **Holden Vespers** offering. During these shorten lesson dates we will continue to hear from our Grace council members as to how Faith has, or is guiding them throughout their lives.

Thank you for the support of our confirmation ministry.

**CONGREGATIONAL RESOURCING EVENT-** You are invited to a day of worship and learning at the Congregational Resourcing Event (CRE) March 14, 2020 at Kishwaukee Community College, Malta, Illinois. The keynote speaker will be our ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton. This event is an opportunity for members of congregations across the Northern Illinois Synod to learn and share resources. Registration and more information can be found at <http://nisynod.org/cre/>, then please add your name to sheet on the Activity Board if you are interested in carpooling from Grace. Please contact one of the pastors if you have any questions.

**LENT-** On Ash Wednesday, **February 26th**, we enter the season of Lent with an invitation to the discipline of Lent—self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love. We hope this season will be a meaningful time for reflection and prayer for you and invite you to the following worship services. On **Ash Wednesday, February 26 at Noon & 7:00 P.M.**, we gather for worship with the imposition of ashes and Holy Communion. Then, for the following five Wednesdays, we gather for **Lenten Midweek Worship services at Noon & 6:30 P.M.** Blessings on this season ahead, we hope to see you in worship.

**ADULT FELLOWSHIP EVENT- Sunday, May 17 - (*note date change*)** Fireside Dinner Theatre, Sunday Brunch and play “A Mighty Fortress”, another Church Basement Ladies production. The Brunch begins at 11:15 with the play at 1:15. We will be car-pooling to this event. Please indicate on sign-up sheet if you need a ride. Cost is \$82. For an information sheet or to sign up see the Activity Binder. If you have any questions, please contact Shirley Busse at 815-338-9063.

**PLAN TO PARTICIPATE; JOIN THE JOURNEY—** Three months of Worship and related community opportunities: February, March and April 2020. Grow in your church life and identity!

**February 22nd and 23rd – TRANSFIGURATION**, the conclusion of Epiphany, the season of light. Celebrate Jesus transformation on the mountain top in the New Orleans tradition of Dixieland Jazz at all services and a Chili Festival. On Sunday, join all the choirs and Grace singers and players in their special presentation of the energizing “When the Saints Go Marching In” and assuring “Just a Closer Walk with Thee” and other inspiring music by our younger choirs and be there after the 10:45 service for the esteemed Grace Chili Fest including a raffle to benefit planned trips for our youth.

**February 26th – ASH WEDNESDAY—noon and 7:00 P.M.** services. The invitation changes providing opportunity for self-reflection and repentance as we begin the journey with Jesus from the mountain top to the cross and ultimately the emptied tomb. Read Pastor Ken’s article on the front page of GFT that invites you to be part of this congregational journey.

**March 5th** begins our five Wednesday 30 minute **Mid-Week services held at noon and 6:30 P.M.**, a new time designed to connect our prime-time meal event with our Lenten congregational reflection. The Wednesday services feature the singing of the Holden Evening Prayer, a favorite of our congregation and reflection on the central text for the season, Philippians 2: 5-11. The services will increase our understanding of the Palm/Passion Weekend liturgy which begins with shouts of Hosanna! and as the story unfolds tells of the coming cries to Crucify.

This Lenten journey, more fully prepares us to experience the depth of Holy Week. We invite you to grow with us in Christian understanding and community as you journey.

**e-GRACE** — To receive your Grace For Today newsletter online just stop by the Information Center and sign up for this service. No one will be removed from the “hard-copy” mailing list unless they have formally subscribed to the e-newsletter.

**UPDATED PHONE AND ADDRESSES**— Please contact the church office if your contact information has changed, or you no longer have/use a landline phone.

#### **SYNOD NEWS-**

Walking Together is the weekly e-news of the Northern Illinois Synod. Everyone is encouraged to subscribe by using the online form at <http://nisynod.org/pubs/wt/> or by sending names and email addresses to [karin@nisynod.org](mailto:karin@nisynod.org).

#### **SAVE THE DATE-**

Souper Bowl of Caring—FEB 1 & 2  
Afternoon Bible Study—FEB 4  
Sewing Circle—FEB 4  
Committee Meeting Night—FEB 4  
DAP—FEB 6  
Budget Forum—FEB 9  
Preschool In-Service Day—FEB 14  
Annual Meeting—FEB 16  
Church Office Closed—FEB 17  
Faith Circle—FEB 17  
Crandall's Fundraiser—FEB 17  
Afternoon Bible Study—FEB 18  
Sewing Circle—FEB 18  
DAP/Council—FEB 20  
Adoration—FEB 21  
Blood Pressure Checks—FEB 23  
Transfiguration/Chili Fest—FEB 23  
Senior Luncheon—FEB 25  
Ash Wednesday Services—FEB 26  
Lenten Soup Lunch—FEB 26  
BSA Patrol Leaders Conf.—FEB 27  
Adoration—FEB 28  
Sewing Circle—MAR 3  
Afternoon Bible Study—MAR 3  
Committee Meeting Night—MAR 3  
Midweek Lent Services—MAR 4  
Lenten Soup Lunch—MAR 4  
DAP—MAR 5

**Visit the Grace website for the most up-to-date information for all that is happening at Grace!**

[gracewoodstock.org](http://gracewoodstock.org)

#### **GRACE STAFF & COUNCIL**

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8:30 am–12:00 pm, F