

# GraceNotes



A Monthly Publication of the Congregational Activities of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Newton, NC  
**Volume 219, Number 4** **April 2016**



*Lord teach me to be a Blessing,  
So I can bless you  
In all I am, all I do  
I want to reflect Christ  
My Lord, My Savior...  
I long to do  
That which is right  
In thy sight...  
You tell us delight ourselves  
In you our King,  
Yes, as an Offering...  
And you will give us  
The desires of our heart...  
Well I ask, as my task...  
Speak to my heart  
At a moments notice  
And show me how to bless  
For this is my confession I Pray...  
For me and others To find the way...  
Knowing Jesus is that way truth and life...  
In all I do, and by His sacrifice  
Lord, my hearts desire is to bless you...  
I ask you now, Send me a clue!  
Teach me to bless,  
So I Lord, may bless you....*

*By Elena Ramirez*

## April Events at Grace

*Learning Hour for all ages  
every Sunday at 9:30  
Worship every Sunday at 10:30  
First Sunday Lunch April 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Second Sunday Breakfast April 10<sup>th</sup>  
Men's Prayer Breakfast April 9<sup>th</sup>  
Clean Up Day April 30<sup>th</sup>*



## From the Pastor's Pen...



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ at Grace,

As we celebrated the end of the Lenten season and the beginning of Easter, I was awestruck by the overpowering reality of the celebration on Easter morning. As the congregation sang the hymn, "Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds", I followed Jackie Jarrett down the center aisle as she carried the Holy Bible to the center of the congregation for the Processional Gospel to be read. I said to Jackie, "This is such a great day!" She immediately agreed. I admit I got teary-eyed as I listened to the congregational voices, took in the scent of the Easter lilies and allowed the excitement of the worship bathe over me. We cannot even begin to imagine what Mary Magdalene experienced on that first Easter morning.

It came to me later that as important as that one day is - and as much as we might love all that happens on Easter Sunday, we forget that the Easter celebration is every Sunday - not just one day! We need to come to worship with the anticipated excitement of Easter and ready and eager to celebrate the Resurrection. That is the very foundation of the Christian faith!

If you have somehow drifted away from worshiping regularly at Grace, I invite you to come and re-discover the joy and excitement of Sunday worship. If we truly are His Easter People, then we need to behave like His Easter People and dedicate ourselves to His Resurrection and Church. There are loving and thoughtful people at Grace who miss you when you are not present on Sunday. Make an Easter resolution that you will get into the habit of worshiping at Grace on Sundays. You will not regret it. I hope to greet you this Sunday!

Easter Blessings! He Is Risen!

Pastor Gil Gilbert



PS: I am looking for the complete set of new DVDs of the ALPHA Course. If you borrowed them, please return them to the Church Office ASAP. We are planning on beginning another ALPHA Course in May and will need these. Also missing is the Tape Number 1 of the former ALPHA Course. Thanks!

## WORSHIP ASSISTANTS FOR APRIL

- ❖ Communion Assistants - James Hall, Johnny Moss
- ❖ Ushers - Eric Martin, Brian Matthews, Joe and Lynette Momier
- ❖ Greeter - Violet Hatchett
- ❖ Altar Preparation - Jane Moss, Belinda Wilfong
- ❖ Children's Church - Carrie Setzer, Susan Setzer
- ❖ Nursery - Carrie Setzer, Susan Setzer

## FLOWER CHART FOR APRIL



4/3 - Nancy Leonard  
4/17- Carl & Glennie Beam

4/10 - Lula Ingle  
4/24 - Sherry Biggerstaff

If you wish to give the flowers for a given Sunday, please list your name on the chart in the narthex. *You are responsible for ordering the flowers from a florist of your choice; we do not have a standing order with any florist.* The liturgical color of the day is listed to assist you in selecting flowers appropriate for that Sunday. You should contact the Church Office so that the correct information is placed in the bulleting for that Sunday. Please notify the Church Office the Thursday prior to your selected Sunday. You can call the Church Office between 9 AM and Noon each weekday, leave a note on the desk, or send an email to let us know the occasion or memoriam for this wonderful gift of beatification of the worship.

## ATTENDANCE AND GIVING TO OUR LORD'S WORK FOR FEBRUARY/MARCH 2016

	02/28/16	03/06/16	03/13/16	03/20/16	03/27/16
SCS	52	33	48	46	25
Worship	89	96	75	98	88
General Offering	2,166.00	6,014.00	1,849.00	1,441.00	2,164.00
Learning Hour	44.61	21.00	130.36	90.00	13.00
Building Fund	92.00	290.00	0.00	40.00	85.00
First Sunday Lunch	0.00	173.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cookbooks	0.00	0.00	0.00	30.00	0.00
Memorial Fund - Danny Bolick	0.00	0.00	0.00	20.00	0.00
Easter Lilies	45.00	118.00	127.00	9.00	0.00
Local Outreach	40.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Lenten Worship	30.00	120.00	132.50	89.00	37.00
Maundy Thursday	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	209.00
Good Friday	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	282.00
Son Rise	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	253.00
Son Rise Breakfast (Safe Harbor)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	155.00

General Fund Checking Account Balance as of 2/29/16 is \$ (22,914.70).  
(Brackets indicate a negative balance).

*NOTE: The financial report will be in the newsletter each month and will be not be published in the weekly worship bulletin. Because the newsletter is distributed the last Sunday of each month, the attendance and giving figures for the last Sunday will be carried over to the next month's newsletter.*

**THE FRED T. FOARD SENIORS** will meet at Noon on Wednesday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, at Ebenezer United Methodist.

**FIRST SUNDAY LUNCH** will be provided by the Christian Education/Learning Ministry Team on Sunday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>. The menu will be spaghetti, salad, bread, and desserts.

**THE WOMEN OF GRACE** will meet Sunday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, following the First Sunday Lunch.

**MEN OF GRACE PRAYER BREAKFAST** will be held on Saturday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, at 9:00 AM at the Blue Moon.

**THE SECOND SUNDAY BREAKFAST** will be held Sunday, April 10<sup>th</sup>, at 9:00 AM and will be provided by Pastor Gil and Karen Gilbert.

**THE GRACE SENIOR/ADULT GROUP** will meet in the Fellowship Hall on Wednesday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, from noon until 2:00 PM. Please invite a friend and come join the fun and fellowship!

**CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY**, love and prayers are extended by the People of God at Grace to Ann Campbell on the death of her son, Danny Bolick. Danny entered the Church Triumphant on Thursday, March 17, 2016. May God comfort all who mourn.

**CORRECTIONS TO CHURCH DIRECTORY:**

New address: Dr. Gary Barger, 3613 Laurel Bluff Circle, High Point, NC 27265

**A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE** about Essie Reinhardt celebrating her 104<sup>th</sup> birthday is posted on the bulletin board in the hallway outside the Pastor's Office. (KH)

**ATTENTION THRIVENT MEMBERS!** You can help provide funds for events held at the church, rather than using money from offerings. Any Thrivent member can now apply at Thrivent.com for a Thrivent Action Team along with other volunteer helpers to do a helping project for others or the church. Upon acceptance, they will receive a \$250 Visa gift card to use as seed money, tee shirts for up to 25 volunteers and a Thrivent Live Generously banner. These funds can be used for fellowship events, worship events, educational events, and service projects. If you have a Thrivent policy of any kind, please look into using this resource to help with events at Grace.

Also you had until March 31<sup>st</sup> to direct your Choice Dollars to a charity/organization of your choice. Hope you put those funds to good use. It can be done on-line or by calling Thrivent. (KH)

**A SPECIAL REQUEST FROM SAFE HARBOR:** There is a need for groups/individuals to come to Safe Harbor for a few days or a week to present a VBS type program for the children staying at Safe Harbor. The programs are offered during June and July, and mornings from 9:00 - 12:00 are preferred. They have been given some resource material or you can use your own. Because the clients change daily, it is hard to plan exactly how many or what age groups may be there. It would be great to get a group from Grace together to go and share the love of Jesus with those children. If interested, please make a note on your Worship Today Form. If you have more specific questions you can contact Jessica Haynes at Safe Harbor at 828-639-4460. (KH)

**NALC NEWS FOR MARCH** is available in the narthex. The article from Bishop Bradosky is entitled "How Easy It Is to Be Distracted". This issue also includes an article on Pastor Didi Panzo's work in Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2016 NALC Convocation theme of "Holy God, Holy Lives", and many other articles about the life of The Church. Please take, read, and educate yourself. (KH)

**THANK YOU FROM SAFE HARBOR RESCUE MISSION:** Thank you SO much for the items you donated. It is greatly appreciate. Thank you for allowing God to use you to help us. Remember they always need all types of school supplies (pencils, colored pencils, markers, notebook paper, spiral notebooks, scissors, glue sticks, crayons, pencil boxes, etc.). There is a plastic tub in the basement which has the blue label, "SAFE HARBOR", for your donations. (KH)

**DONATIONS FOR ECCCM** should be placed in the plastic tub in the basement which has the yellow label, "ECCCM". Be sure you place your donations in the intended organizations receptacle. ECCCM needs your continuous help to keep the Food Pantry and Homeless Shelter supplied. They are asking for items for children (toys, blankets, and clothing), food, toiletry items (shampoo, tooth paste, tooth brushes, combs, brushes, etc.) and grocery bags. Any items brought to the church for this ministry will be delivered to ECCCM. *Be reminded that they can no longer accept used egg cartons.* (JB, KH)

**THOSE SERVING AS NURSERY ATTENDANTS AND CHILDREN'S CHURCH LEADERS** are asked to record those attending both of these events each Sunday morning. There is a clipboard with an attendance sheet attached. Please list first and last names if at all possible. At the end of worship the sheet can be placed in the Church Office mailbox or on the desk in the Church Office. Volunteers are greatly needed to serve in these areas. Please notify the Church Office if you would like to help. (JH)

**THANKS BE TO GOD AS SAMUEL BIGGERSTAFF** received his First Communion on Easter Sunday. He has completed his First Communion instruction and we give thanks to God for his coming to the Table. (PG)

**NEW TABLECLOTHS** for Fellowship Hall have been donated by Lorene Heavner in memory of her husband, J. D. Heavner and son, David. We also thank Lorene and Jackie Jarrett for floral arrangements in Fellowship Hall. (JH)

**GRACE COOKBOOKS** are still available for sale. Contact the Church Office if you would like a purchase a copy. The cost is \$15.00. There are only a few left, so plan now for a birthday or Christmas gift for friends or family. (KH)

**THE NEW CHRIST CANDLE** in the Chancel was presented for the first time on Easter Sunday. Thank you Pastor Gil and Karen for donating this lovely addition to the Church. (KH)

**NEWSLETTER DEADLINE** for articles for the May Newsletter will be moved up to April 18<sup>th</sup> due to the last Sunday of the month being the 24<sup>th</sup>. The Church Office needs the articles/information early in the week to allow for time to put it all together. Thanks for your cooperation. (KH)

**SPECIAL THANKS** to all choir members, soloists, and our trumpeter, Eric Martin, for their musical presentations during the Lenten and Easter Services this year. (JH)

**NOMINATIONS ARE NOW BEING RECEIVED** for positions to be elected at the 2016 NALC Convocation, August 10-12 in Anaheim, California. We seek nominations for the following positions:

Executive Council	1 clergy and 1 layperson, each for a 4-year term
Court of Adjudication	1 person for a 4-year term
NALS Board of Regents	4 persons: three for 6-year terms, and one for a 4-year term

Congregations and individuals are welcome to nominate individuals for any of the open positions as well as for the 2016 Nominations Committee.

**All nominations should be submitted by May 1, 2016.** This will give us the time necessary to compile nominee biographical information and comply with the constitutional requirements about providing this information to the delegates.

To submit a nomination, please complete the Nomination Form and return it to the Nominating Committee at [nominations@thenalc.org](mailto:nominations@thenalc.org). This is the preferred submission method. Otherwise, forms may be mailed to Pastor Don Brandt; Our Savior's Lutheran Church; 1770 Baxter Rd SE; Salem, OR 97306-1140. Contact the Church Office if you desire a copy of the Nomination Form. (KH)

### **PSALM 23**

The Lord is my Shepherd...THAT'S RELATIONSHIP!

I shall not want...THAT'S SUPPLY!

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures...THAT'S REST!

He leadeth me beside still waters...THAT'S REFRESHMENT!

He restoreth my soul...THAT'S HEALING!

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness...THAT'S GUIDANCE!

For His name sake...THAT'S PURPOSE!

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...THAT'S CHALLENGE!

I will fear no evil...THAT'S ASSURANCE!

For thou art with me...THAT'S FAITHFULNESS!

Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me...THAT'S SHELTER!

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies...THAT'S HOPE!

Thou anointest my head with oil...THAT'S CONSECRATION!

My cup runneth over...THAT'S ABUNDANCE!

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life...THAT'S BLESSING!

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord...THAT'S SECURITY!

Forever...THAT'S ETERNITY!

-- Author Unknown (PG)

### **UPCOMING GOLF TOURNAMENTS**

1. Christian Community Outreach Ministries is having a FUNdraiser on Friday, May 20<sup>th</sup> at River Oaks Golf Course. Registration and lunch (provided by Olive Garden) begins at 11:30 and the Shotgun Start is at 1:00. CCOM needs help in renovating the outside of their building with vinyl siding and help in continuing to provide free Biblical counseling for hurting families and other helps as well. Contact the Church Office for more details.

2.ECCCM is hosting their 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Benefit Tournament on Thursday, May 5<sup>th</sup> at the Glen Oaks Golf Club in Maiden. Registration and a BBQ lunch (provided by Methodist Men of First United Methodist Church in Conover) begins at 11:30 and the Shotgun Start is at 1:00. (PG)

## **PASTOR APOLOGIZES FOR MISUNDERSTOOD COMMENTS**

The following is an article based on a recent interview with Pastor Andy Stanly (son of Pastor Charles Stanley of Atlanta). Andy is pastor of the 36,000 member North Point Community Church in Alpharetta Georgia.

Pastor Stanley: I was not condemning any size church specifically. And people who understood any different are just like me, they listen through their own filter. If I were discussing this issue with church leaders, I wouldn't have said anything about the size of a local church. When it comes to passion for the next generation, size really doesn't matter. I can understand how pastors and volunteers in small churches felt like I was gunning for them. Based on what I said, how could they not?

Church leaders who are leading and building Great Commission-centered churches want their churches to grow. There's nothing wrong with a small church... and by "small" I don't mean anything less than "mega," which is apparently what some folks took me to be saying. But I've never met a youth pastor who wouldn't be thrilled with the challenge of having to divide middle school kids from high school kids because she or he had so many kids coming to church. Student leaders who know their stuff know it's best to create separate environments for middle school and high school kids. However it takes time to grow a youth ministry, and depending upon the size and location of the community, there may never be enough students to pull that off.

My gripe is with the grown-ups who are anti-growth because they like their church just the way it is. Truth be known, most pastors—regardless of their church size—are not fans of adult attendees who are resistant to change and growth.

**Interviewer: You told parents they should leave small churches and put their kids in large or larger churches—and you chastised them for caring “nothing about the next generation” if they left their small churches.**

While that may be true for some parents, it was extraordinarily irresponsible for me to suggest that this is the responsible thing for every parent to do. It's not. How could I possibly know what every parent should do? My comment was way out of bounds. No one should force their kids to attend a church they hate simply because mom and/or dad like it or because their grandparents attend that church. What many folks heard me say, that I don't believe, is that *all* parents who attend a small church should take their kids out of their small church and put them in a large church.

The bottom line is that parents who prioritize their church experience over their children's experience should reconsider, and to do otherwise is selfish. But that's not exactly what I said. (from Pathos Christian News, March 7, 2016) (PG)

## **VBS IS COMING - ARE YOU READY??**

It is never too early to plan for Vacation Bible School. We have set the date for July 31<sup>st</sup> through August 4<sup>th</sup>. Plan now to attend (and help with) this exciting event. (NL)

**WNALC FEBRUARY - MARCH NEWSLETTER** is posted on the bulletin board across the hall from the Pastor's Office. It offers a great article about the upcoming 2016 Women of the NALC annual Gathering to be held in Anaheim, CA on Tuesday, August 9<sup>th</sup>, prior to the NALC Convocation. This will be a great time to learn much about women's ministry throughout the NALC. The newsletter also has some great articles about missions. Please take a copy and read - share with other women at Grace. When finished, please return the copy to the bulletin board for others to read. You can also access it online at <http://thenalc.org/congregationally-focused-womans-ministry>. (KH)



## **NUNS MARTYRED IN YEMEN**

Rome, Italy, Mar 8, 2016 / 01:27 pm (CNA/EWTN News).- Sister Anslem, Sister Reginette, Sister Judith, Sister Marguerite, and were serving as caretakers at the Missionaries of Charity's convent and nursing home in Aden, Yemen.

These sisters left their homes in India and Africa to serve the poor, elderly, and disabled in the war-torn country of Yemen. They worked together with volunteers at the convent's home care center, where they served around sixty to eighty patients of all religions.

"They were serving all poor people irrespective of their religion. Their duty was to help the poor," a representative from the Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Arabia told CNA.

But on March 4, the convent was attacked by two gunmen who killed Sr. Anslem, Sr. Judith, Sr. Marguerite, and Sr. Reginette, along with sixteen other victims, including volunteers from Ethiopia and Yemen. Each victim was found handcuffed and shot in the head.

No residents of the nursing home were harmed.

Pope Francis called the sisters "martyrs of today" who "gave their blood for the Church."

According to a statement from the Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Arabia, Sr. Anslem was from Ranchi, India and would have turned 60 years old on May 8. Sr. Judith was from Kenya and had just turned 41 years old on Feb. 2. Sr. Marguerite was



from Rwanda and would have been 44 years old on April 29. The youngest nun, Sr. Reginette, was from Rwanda and would've turned 33 on June 29.

Since the attack, the Missionaries of Charity's nursing home has been relying on the aid of volunteers and government support to continue their care of the elderly, which has lasted for 24 years in Aden.

"Now, the local government is taking care of the elderly with the help of some volunteers, university students and young people," the representative said. The country of Yemen is in the midst of a year-long civil war which has claimed the lives of more than 6,000 people. (PG)

## **GOD HAS CALLED PASTORS TO SERVE**

- The Rev. Joshua Morgan was installed as Pastor of Advent Lutheran Church, King's Mountain, NC. on Sunday, March 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Tonya Brittain was ordained into the Ministry of Word and Sacrament on Sunday, March 13<sup>th</sup> at Union Lutheran Church in Salisbury. Bishop John Bradosky presided. Tonya has accepted a call at First English Lutheran Church in Marysville, Ohio.
- The Rev. Jason Sigmon will be installed as Pastor of Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, Claremont, NC on Sunday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, at 3:00 PM.

We pray God's blessings on each of these shepherds as they begin new ministries. (KH)

*I had been teaching my three-year old daughter, Caitlin, the Lord's Prayer for several evenings at bedtime, she would repeat after me the lines from the prayer. Finally, she decided to go solo. I listened with pride as she carefully enunciated each word, right up to the end of the prayer: "Lead us not into temptation," she prayed, "but deliver us some E-mail. Amen."*





### **THANK GOD FOR MOUNTAIN TOP EXPERIENCES!**

Ladies from 10 different states gathered at The Cove near Asheville for a fabulous Women's Spring Luncheon and Bible Study on March 13<sup>th</sup>. Worship was led by Gwen Smith, a gifted worship leader, speaker, author, and songwriter. To learn more about Gwen, visit her website at [GwenSmith.net](http://GwenSmith.net). Her program was entitled "I Want It All". Her focus was on all that God wills for us. We were challenged to look our souls in the eye and connect ourselves with the heart of God.

For those that had never been to the Cove, it was a fabulous experience. We shared a wonderful time together as we deepened friendships, enjoyed food, fun, and fellowship as well as spiritual renewal. Be sure to talk to any of the ladies pictured here about the day. As they said, "What happened on the mountain needs to be shared in the valley!" Praise the Lord for his many blessings. (GB,KG,IS)

### **TOOLS OF SATAN THAT DESTROY...**

- Gossip is a sly and sneaky sin that can destroy the unity of a congregation.
- Gossip points to self importance; ministry and service points to the importance of others.
- There is NEVER a time when gossip helps or builds up.
- Once gossip is out about someone, it's hard to correct it - even if it's false.
- Gossip not only hurts the reputation of the subject, but of those who pass it on as well.
- If someone gossips about someone TO you, they'd likely gossip about you to someone else.
- Gossip is a very evil and destructive force within the church.
- Churches should have an environment of trust that does not allow for gossip.
- Every church covenant/constitution should address gossip.
- Beware of gossip at all times and make sure you refrain from it at all costs. Know that there are also laws in our land (slander, defamation of character, etc.) that address gossip and are punishable by the courts.

The nine ways gossip destroys a church are:

- |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1. It's evil.               | 2. It's Idolatrous.                      |
| 3. It's self-centered.      | 4. It's divisive.                        |
| 5. It's often deceptive.    | 6. It harms reputations.                 |
| 7. It destroys trust.       | 8. It indicates hypocrisy in the church. |
| 9. It risks God's judgment. |  |

---from Chuck Lawless' book, *Things and People That Destroy the Church* (PG)

## **QUILTING NEWS FROM A "DISASTER RESPONSE" PERSPECTIVE**

Many of the Lutheran churches have a quilting or sewing group that makes quilts and kits. A lot of those items are sent to Lutheran World Relief, which does wonderful work helping our brothers and sisters in need overseas. If your sewing group is like mine, we receive many donations of fabric from all over. In sewing quilts for LWR, there are certain patterns that they cannot accept. For example, LWR does not take anything with religious symbols, patriotic and military signs (including camouflage), and some holidays. What to do with this fabric?

The answer is disaster response quilts! The NALC Disaster Response Task Force was formed to help individuals & families by providing assistance when disaster strikes. The focus is in areas in the United States. A warehouse in Caldwell, Ohio has been obtained to store supplies before they are dispersed. This is where quilts (and health kits & more) come in! The Task Force can use all kinds of quilts & blankets made with any printed fabric *including fabric printed with religious, patriotic & military symbols!* The Task Force also welcomes any size quilt or blanket - it does not have to be the standard 80" x 60" that LWR requests. For example, a lady at our church likes to sew baby blankets and lap robes. We send these to the Disaster Warehouse as well as other items. Some churches split their donations between the warehouse and Lutheran World Relief.

So spread the word! There is a use for that patriotic fabric or material with angels and nativity scenes on it! For more information about the Disaster Task Force & the warehouse in Caldwell, contact: Rev. David McGettigan, Disaster Response Coordinator, dmcgettigan@comcast.net, 609-742-2449 or Mary Bates, LSS Disaster Response Services, batesm55@gmail.com, 740-732-6700. Happy Stitching!! (article written by Pat Dittrich of the WNALC Council and taken from the WNALC February - March Newsletter) (KH)

## **QUILTS NEEDED FOR THE NEW MEN'S GROUP HOME IN CATAWBA COUNTY**

It is time to get the Grace Quilting Ministry stitching again. The group home is in need of twin size quilts for 18 beds. They will have a baseball team at the home and would like quilts using that theme.

Lois Reynolds, with The Scraps of Love ministry at Point of Grace, has begun collecting baseball fabric and would love to partner with Grace again to provide baseball quilts for this new ministry. If interest, please contact Kandra Johnson or Sandra Powell.

## **DRINK, STEAL, SWEAR & LIE**

(Not what you think, so read on)!

FOUR RULES TO LIVE BY: I met this guy while I was in Albuquerque and he has a motto he lives by every day. He said listen carefully and live by these 4 rules: Drink, Steal, Swear, & Lie. I was shaking my head 'no', but he then told me to listen while he explained his four rules. So here they are:

1. "Drink" from the "everlasting cup" every day.
2. "Steal" a moment to help someone that is in worse shape than you are.
3. "Swear" that you will be a better person today than yesterday.
4. And last, but not least, when you "lie" down at night, thank God for the blessing you received that helped you live through the day.

I am not as good as I should be; I am not as good as I could be; but THANK GOD, I am better than I used to be. - Author Unknown (PG)

## **A MOTION PICTURE TO SEE**

### **GOD'S NOT DEAD 2**

While attending the *God's Not Dead 2* premiere in Hollywood on Monday, high school football coach Joe Kennedy and U.S. Navy Chaplain Wes Modder watched something unfold on screen that they experienced first hand. This motion picture tells the fictional story of Grace Wesley—a public school teacher and a Christian who faces religious discrimination and hostility for mentioning Jesus in the classroom. While many might say, *it's just a movie*, hundreds of Americans like Chaplain Modder and Coach Kennedy are facing similar trials every day.

In March of 2015, Chaplain Modder was nearly kicked out of the Navy for sharing his biblical beliefs in private counseling sessions. He finally achieved victory and returned to his duties after a months-long legal battle.

In October of 2015, Coach Kennedy was suspended from his coaching job for personally praying at the 50-yard line after football games. His legal battle is still ongoing, and he hasn't been allowed to coach since his suspension. Their stories are real, and only a few of many.

Walt Tutka was terminated in 2013 for giving a student a Bible. While holding open the door for a student one day, Tutka, a longtime substitute teacher, commented to the student, "the first shall be last, but the last shall be first." The student asked Tutka several times over a number of days for the source of the quote, and eventually Tutka showed the student the quote in his personal Bible so the student would know where to find it when he was at home. When the student said he didn't have a Bible, Tutka spontaneously handed the student his personal Bible so he could look up the quote at home.

On October 15, 2012, Phillipsburg School District abruptly suspended Tutka's employment for giving the student his Bible. On January 14, 2013, the school board terminated him.

There are other cases pending involving schools and colleges:

- The Kountze Cheerleaders, middle and high school students banned from painting Bible verses on cheer banners.
- Audrey Jarvis, a college student reprimanded for wearing a cross necklace.
- Angela Hildenbrand, a high school senior threatened with jail if she prayed during her graduation speech.

*God's Not Dead 2* does a terrific job of depicting the kind of battles Christians face in real life. It is hoped that by seeing this movie, more Americans will realize the magnitude of the hostility so many people of faith are facing right now, and that our religious freedom is meaningless unless we are willing to take a stand. *God's Not Dead 2* will open in theaters nationwide on April 1.

Other religious films now in the theaters which have received high reviews are "Risen" and "Miracles From Heaven" (PG)

## **OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD SHOEBOX MINISTRY**

"As much as I've enjoyed seeing children squealing with delight at what might be the first Christmas gifts they have ever received, we need to remember that this is only the beginning. In the coming months, millions of these children will also have opportunities to grow in faith as they participate in The Greatest Journey, the discipleship program Samaritan's Purse has developed as a Gospel-focused follow-up to Operation Christmas Child.

We are seeing churches planted as the Good News of salvation reaches some of the farthest corners of the earth. In the past six years, more than 7.4 million children have participated in the 12 Bible lessons. Praise God that more than 3.4 million of them have made decisions for Christ. We are raising up an army of young evangelists.

In one West African country, for example, a village pastor faithfully labored for 21 years without seeing a single soul accept Jesus. But once he handed out shoebox gifts to the village children, the Lord began to open doors and change hearts. Even the local imam was moved by what he recognized as God's love. For the first time, young people gathered at the pastor's home, where they have grown into a thriving church.

In Uganda, a boy named Christopher told us how his shoebox gift from Operation Christmas Child made him feel loved like never before. Through The Greatest Journey, he learned more about that love. He memorized a passage from the parable of the Good Samaritan: *'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind', and 'your neighbor as yourself'* (Luke 10:27).

Christopher loves children and loves telling them about Jesus. They call him "Pastor," even though he is only 13. His teacher has seen several younger children saved and many change their behaviors through Christopher's witness.

Around the world, millions of boys and girls like Christopher are faithfully sharing the Good News they learned through Operation Christmas Child and The Greatest journey, and now they are praying for their friends and family to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

This year, we are trusting God to be able to reach 3.5 million children with The Greatest Journey. That's almost a million more than last year. Thank you for your prayers and support for this life-changing ministry. May God bless you." - Franklin Graham

Remember - there are shoeboxes in the Narthex to be filled throughout the year. Take the burden off your wallet in December by filling a box every month or two. Help increase Grace's contribution to this far reaching ministry. (KH)

### **NEW TERMINOLOGY INCLUDED IN THE CONSTITUTION**

The following names/terms are now being used as reflected in the Constitution and NALC:

Leadership Ministry Board replaces Church Council

Spending Plan replaces Budget

Ministry Teams replaces Committees

Learning Ministry Team replaces Christian Education Committee

Witness Ministry Team replaces Evangelism Committee

Hospitality Ministry Team replaces Fellowship Committee

Outreach Ministry Team replaces Human Concerns Committee

Plant and Facilities Ministry Team replaces Property Committee

Finance and Stewardship Ministry Team replaces Stewardship Committee and Finance Committee

Praise & Worship Ministry Team replaces Worship & Music Committee

Children's Ministry Team replaces Youth Committee

The use of the title of 'team' invokes a group working together as a team. No one wants to serve on a committee any more. Most people like serving on teams. All of the teams listed above have a part of the ministry and therefore are 'ministries' unto themselves. Using the explanation of St. Paul, all of these ministries are part of the body of Christ.

The Annual Congregation Meeting will be the First Sunday in November of each year. The classification of members is defined as Active, Inactive, and Associate. An Active (voting) member is one who is baptized, confirmed, has communed at least 6 (six) times during the year and has made a financial contribution to the church. The Leadership Ministry Board shall consist of 9 members, three members to exit the Board each year and three to be elected by the congregation at the Annual Congregation meeting. Immediate family members shall not serve on the same Board.

## BOARD NOTES from MARCH MEETING

Leadership Board met on March 13. Carl Beam led the opening devotions. Board discussed the assigned chapter in the book Healthy Congregations.

**PROPERTY TEAM** reported that all heating and A/C units have been inspected. A new lock will be installed on the basement door at Union Church. Much discussion on safety and security of the lower level door (church office). Options will be presented at next Board meeting. Investigating the present security system at the main church building. Dead tree in front of parsonage needs to be taken down.

**FINANCE TEAM:** Mike Pisko (Financial Secretary) and Ricky Bivens (Treasurer) have developed newer methods for counting, depositing and reporting of offerings and other income. Reporting forms were presented and the Board chose which forms would be the most advantageous. Congregation is operating under a deficit as of the end of 2015. Board directed the Finance Team to explore different stewardship models for a congregational campaign and asked Pastor Gilbert to lead that study.

The Congregational Meeting was held on March 6 and the newly revised Constitution was approved.

**LEARNING:** Youth Class will be hosting the First Sunday Lunch in May. Plans for Rally Day in September are being laid. Joe Momier is assisting in the Pre-Teen Class with Rick Bivens.

**PRAISE AND WORSHIP:** Easter schedule will be as follows: SonRise Worship at Union at 7:00 am; SunRise Breakfast at 8:00 am; Learning hour at 9:30 am; and Easter Worship at 10:30 am.

Next Meeting will be April 10 at 4 p.m.

## FAITH CUP

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

— ROMANS 5:2 KJV

## YOU WILL NEVER BE SORRY...

- ...for thinking before acting.
  - ...for hearing before judging.
  - ...for forgiving your enemies.
  - ...for being candid and frank.
  - ...for helping a fallen brother.
  - ...for being honest in business.
  - ...for thinking before speaking.
  - ...for being loyal to your church.
  - ...for standing by your principles.
  - ...for closing your ears to gossip.
  - ...for bridling a slanderous tongue.
  - ...for harboring pure thoughts.
  - ...for sympathizing with the afflicted.
  - ...for being courteous and kind to all.
- Author Unknown

## **THE FINAL DOWNTON ABBEY?**

Who would have guessed in September 2010 when Downton Abbey's first season began to air in the U.K. that yet another period piece from the adept British producers of endless period pieces would take the world by storm? And yet, through adept writing and casting by Julian Fellowes and beautiful mansions and costumes and trains and cars, and story lines that were addictive and good acting by actors we had largely never seen before (missing out Maggie Smith and Elizabeth McGovern of course and guest appearances by the likes of Shirley MacLaine), this did indeed become the most watched PBS/ITV program ever..... by a lot.

It begins with the 1912 sinking of the Titanic, trudged through the first World War, transitions to the challenging Twenties, and finished with a bang at New Years 1926. But the real stories were not those set on the world stage, except insofar as they affected the central characters of Downton Abbey, but the stories of those who were 'to the manor borne' but discovered that WWI had knocked the stuffings out of the landed gentry life of lords and ladies for the most part, and had indeed also fueled the revolution for women's suffrage and less suffering for indentured servants. Being 'in service' for one's whole life, by which was meant being servants in a grand house working like a dog for the lords and ladies, and never having a home of one's own, and never getting married, and basically never having a life of one's own, well....clearly that way of life was going the way of the dodo bird— doomed to extinction, and a good thing to.

At times Downton Abbey, set in Yorkshire, but actually filmed at Highclere Castle in Newbury West Berkshire, threatened to generate into an early 20th century soap opera. And yet Fellowes managed to keep just enough of an external story line going that was interesting to prevent the tales of woes of wooing and losing of Lady Mary or Lady Sybil or Lady Rose or even Lady Edith from becoming all consuming. Actually, the tales from the downstairs servants' quarters proved far more interesting at times, especially the in jail and out of jail stories involving Bates and Anna, or the sinister yet surviving Barrow tales, or the kitchen hijinks of Mrs. Pattmore and Daisy. No wonder Carson and Mrs. Hughes occasionally seemed to have apoplexy trying to keep the house in order.

What really kept people watching the show for six years more than anything else is that the characters seems so real, and we wanted to see how they 'got on' in life. Yes, no doubt in America, there was some envy of the life of the gentrified in a house built like a castle, a kind of life, even the wealthiest in America never really had to that degree, but the common decency of the 'ordinary folk' was far more appealing, doing endless sacrificial service for others. The food, the fairs, the weddings, the funerals, the customs, the protocols all became interesting because we cared about the characters, and along the way got a history listen for free.

The only regret about the series is that it did not do a better job of showing the religious life of various characters in a time when the Christian church was not only the dominant religion in the U.K. but a very influential one in everyday life. But who are we to quibble after being served such an enjoyable period feast. It was rather like going to a medieval banquet and suddenly realizing one wants to be one of the characters in the drama. Hail and farewell and Godspeed Downton Abbey..... now let's hope Lady Mary's baby turns out to be a little less toffee-nosed than her Mum. P.S. Rumour (not to be confused with Rumor) has it that there will be a feature film done— a big screen version of Downton Abbey. Let's hope it's true, but that it takes the story further forward, rather than being a rewind or edited version of the first six seasons.

## **AND THEN IT IS WINTER**

You know. . . time has a way of moving quickly and catching you unaware of the passing years. It seems just yesterday that I was young, just married and embarking on my new life with my mate. Yet in a way, it seems like eons ago, and I wonder where all the years went. I know that I lived them all. I have glimpses of how it was back then and of all my hopes and dreams. But, here it is... the winter of my life and it catches me by surprise...How did I get here so fast? Where did the years go and where did my youth go?

Each day now, I find that just getting a shower is a real target for the day! And taking a nap is not a treat anymore... it's mandatory! Cause if I don't on my own free will... I just fall asleep where I sit! And so...now I enter into this new season of my life unprepared for all the aches and pains and the loss of strength and ability to go and do things that I wish I had done but never did!

But, at least I know, that though the winter has come, and I'm not sure how long it will last...this I know, that when it's over on this earth...it's NOT over. A new adventure will begin!

Yes, I have regrets. There are things I wish I hadn't done...things I should have done, but indeed, there are many things I'm happy to have done. It's all in a lifetime. So, if you're not in your winter yet...let me remind you, that it will be here faster than you think. So, whatever you would like to accomplish in your life please do it quickly! Don't put things off too long!

Life goes by quickly. So, do what you can today, as you can never be sure whether this is your winter or not! You have no promise that you will see all the seasons of your life...so, live for today and say all the things that you want your loved ones to remember...and hope that they appreciate and love you for all the things that you have done for them in all the years past!

"Life" is a gift to you. The way you live your life is your gift to those who come after. Make it a fantastic one. LIVE IT WELL! ENJOY TODAY! DO SOMETHING FUN! BE HAPPY! HAVE A GREAT DAY! REMEMBER:... "It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver. "LIVE HAPPY IN THIS YEAR AND EVERY YEAR! LASTLY, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING: TODAY IS THE OLDEST YOU'VE EVER BEEN, YET THE YOUNGEST YOU'LL EVER BE SO - ENJOY THIS DAY WHILE IT LASTS.

~Your kids are becoming you.

~Going out is good. Coming home is better!

~You forget names.... But it's OK because other people forgot they even knew you!!!

~You realize you're never going to be really good at anything.... especially golf.

~The things you used to care to do, you no longer care to do, but you really do care that you don't care to do them anymore.

~You sleep better on a lounge chair with the TV blaring than in bed. It's called "pre-sleep".

~You miss the days when everything worked with just an "ON" and "OFF" switch.

~You tend to use more 4 letter words ... "what?"..."when?"... "what?" . ???

~Now that you can afford expensive jewelry, it's not safe to wear it anywhere.

~You notice everything they sell in stores is "sleeveless"!!!!

~What used to be freckles are now liver spots.

~Everybody whispers.

~You have 3 sizes of clothes in your closet.... 2 of which you will never wear.

~But Old is good in some things: Old Songs, Old movies, and best of all, OLD FRIENDS!!

Stay well, "OLD FRIEND!" Pass this on to other "Old Friends!" and let them laugh in AGREEMENT!!! It's Not What You Gather, But What You Scatter That Tells What Kind Of Life You Have Lived. (PG)



# Grace Notes

**Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church N.A.L.C.  
4536 Hickory Lincolnton Highway  
Newton, NC 28658**

Dated Material - Please Deliver Promptly