

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH – MISSOURI SYNOD

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February & March 2019

**“How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God,
and this is the gate of heaven.” (Genesis 28:17, ESV)**

Dear Friends in Christ:

The year of our Lord 1919 was an important year in American and Wisconsin history. The United States Congress approved the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which would guarantee women the right to vote. A professional football team, the Packers, was founded in Green Bay by Curly Lambeau and George Whitney Calhoun. And, although much less famous than these events, a Lutheran congregation was founded at the corner of Washington and West Lawn Avenues in West Racine by eight families from Racine's Trinity Lutheran Church. That new congregation, Grace English Evangelical Lutheran Church, celebrates its centennial anniversary this year.

Much has changed over these past 100 years. Through the decades, the members of Grace have worked hard to meet the changes and challenges of the times. The original small chapel built in 1919 was replaced by our current larger church in 1942. About twenty years later, in 1961, a three-story education unit was constructed to add needed space for Sunday School. The year 2000 brought more changes as we added a parking lot and installed air conditioning. And now in 2019, our centennial year, we rejoice that we have added an elevator to our building (with an adjoining lobby and canopy) to allow more people to come into our church to worship God and hear His unchanging Word.

This is a joyous time for us at Grace. I give thanks and praise to God for the addition of this elevator. We have looked forward to this day for many years. I also thank our General Contractor, Absolute Construction Enterprises, Inc., of Caledonia, and their many subcontractors for their outstanding work. Partners in Design Architects, Inc., of Kenosha designed the elevator addition for us, and the Lutheran Church Extension Fund provided the necessary financing. I am grateful for their wonderful guidance and assistance also.

At the risk of leaving someone out (I apologize if I did), I also thank the members of Grace's Elevator Committee (Curt Woodward, Charlie French, John Adams, and Nancy Lockrem); our trustees (Dennis Eaton and Daniel Widmar); our outgoing church treasurer, Susan Pierce-Ruhland; and our outgoing Memorial Committee treasurer, Vicky Krenzke. Special thanks are due to Gaylord and Bonnie Weidner for their tireless and loving work to keep our church so clean throughout the eight months of construction. Thank you also to Jim Day and the members of our Safety and Security Team for ensuring the church was locked and secure at night. Finally, I thank the entire congregation for your work, generosity, and overall support of this project.

The dedication of our elevator addition will take place on Sunday, February 3, 2019. We will begin the day with our worship service at 9:00 AM, followed by the dedication and a reception at 10:30 AM. Please join us as we celebrate and give thanks to God for His many blessings here at Grace, including this elevator.

Although much has changed over the past century, the mission and purpose of our congregation has not changed—to preach and teach the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the same yesterday and today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). With the addition of this elevator, we look forward to welcoming more people into our church to receive the gifts of Jesus with us—forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation—as we begin another century under God's continued grace and blessing.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Brian Crane

FROM THE BOARD OF ELDERS

The world of 1919 seems far, far away to me.

The world was still recovering and rebuilding after the first World War. Traveling by automobile was a luxury that only the rich could afford. And commonplace items to us such as telephones, radio, and movies were only in their beginning stages.

So much has changed in these 100 years, but God has blessed us that Grace Lutheran Church still remains a century later.

We have endless thanks to give to God for these many years of blessings. And we also have work to do in order to strengthen our church for the future.

The Board of Elders met at their annual retreat in January to consider some of these questions about our future.

Our elevator project is complete, and we look forward to the increased opportunities this brings with it to bring more members and new guests to Grace. This gives us all the responsibility to think of how to make Grace the most accessible, inviting, and welcoming of a church as it can be.

We continue to review the impact of having one Sunday service at Grace as we approach our first full year of this arrangement.

And in all things this year, we hope to find togetherness. Grace would have never been able to exist for this long without God's blessings of unity and support among our membership.

To that end, we hope to see all of you at church and Bible study as much as possible. And we also hope to see you all at the Grace Town Hall meeting on Sunday, March 31st, at 10:30 AM. This meeting is an opportunity for our entire congregation to share their thoughts about the future of Grace and the opportunities that await us.

As our theme verse for 2019, 1 Peter 4:10, says: "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace." The gifts that God has given Grace over the last 100 years are immeasurable. And we look forward to working together to plan for our next 100 years.

God Bless,
Matthew Olson

FROM THE BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP

It is no secret that God calls us to be generous with the gifts He has given us. Throughout the Bible, we read that just as God has generously given to us, so are we to give generously one to another. As Jesus said, "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35) and "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36).

But God also calls us to give to Him. And He, who does all things well, presses it into service for the benefit of all the people of God. See for example what God spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, after he and the people were safely brought out of Egypt across the Red Sea on dry land:

The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution. From every man whose heart moves him you shall receive the contribution for me. And this is the contribution that you shall receive from them: gold, silver, and bronze, blue and purple and scarlet

yarns and fine twined linen, goats' hair, tanned rams' skins, goatskins, acacia wood, oil for the lamps, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, onyx stones, and stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece. And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it. (Exodus 25:1–9; ESV)

Notice in verse two that the Lord instructs Moses to tell the Israelites to “take for me a contribution” and that from everyone motivated from gratitude for what God has just accomplished and given to them, Moses is to gather up “the contribution for me.”

Pay attention, though, why the Lord wants the people of Israel to gather up these contributions for Him. God tells Moses precisely why: “let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.” The purpose for the contribution of the Israelites was so that He may dwell with them, that He would live among them. Through the tabernacle and the priesthood, through their rites and ceremonies, through their feasts and festivals, as through means, the Lord God, who brought them out of the bondage of Egypt would live and dwell among them and be their God, and lead them into the promised land, which flowed with milk and honey.

God dwells among us still. In the fullness of time, God's son was born of woman, born under the law to redeem those under the law. He brought us out of bondage to sin, death, the devil, and hell, and He did this by His obedient suffering and death, His resurrection and ascension. But He is not gone. He dwells with us through the means of His Word and His sacraments, through the preaching and the teaching of our pastors, through the rites and ceremonies of our liturgy. He dwells with us in the Church through those means. And He is leading us to the true promised land, to the new heavens and the new earth in the new creation.

In the meantime, as God, even now, continues to call us to give to Him, let us, who have been saved from slavery to sin and death, the devil and hell, be so moved in our hearts as to give generously to Him so that the means of grace, the means of His gracious dwelling among us, would continue now and into the future. For just as He did then, so does He do now. He presses the gifts given to Him into service for the benefit of all His people. He puts it to use so that we may have Him with us always, even unto the end of the age.

FROM THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND THE BOARD OF YOUTH

Youth Group Schedule:

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|------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| February 8 th (Friday) | Meeting | 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM |
| February 24 th (Sunday) | Meeting | 11:30 AM – 2:00 PM |
| March 8 th (Friday) | Meeting | 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM |
| March 17 th (Sunday) | Fundraiser Luncheon | 12:00 PM |
| March 22 nd (Friday) | Family Game Night | 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM |

The Sunday School and Youth Bible Study students will be singing in church on **Sunday, February 10th, and Sunday, March 10th**. Please be in the downstairs chapel at **8:30 AM** to practice our song.

On **Sunday, March 17th**, at **12:00 PM**, the youth group is hosting a St. Patrick's Day fundraiser luncheon. The menu will be Corned Beef and Cabbage, Hot Beef, Sides, Desserts & Beverages. Tickets will be for sale in the Office Equipment Room. The cost of tickets is \$10.00 for adults and \$5.00 for kids ages 3-10.

The dates of **SONRISE NATIONAL PARK Vacation Bible School** are **Monday, August 5th – Friday, August 9th**. The time will be **9:00 AM – 12:00 PM**. Watch for more information in upcoming bulletins and newsletters.



"Behold the man!" proclaimed the unwitting preacher Pontius Pilate in one of the shortest, yet most profound, sermons ever recorded. This will be our endeavor this Lententide and Easter Sunday. Behold the man, God in human flesh, Jesus. His incarnation will provide the basis for our meditation and proclamation on His Passion. And His real, bodily suffering and death will provide the basis for our full-throated proclamation on Easter morning of a bodily resurrection, not just of Jesus but also for His saints. Real bodies that have suffered, wept, bled, prayed, eaten, hoped, and more will be those raised incorruptible from their graves on the day of Jesus' return.

This Lent, we will consider what it means that God became man. In preparation for the celebration of a real, bodily, flesh-and-blood, bone-and-sinew resurrection, the resurrection without which our faith and our preaching are all in vain, consider the body of Jesus that exists in order to be nailed to a cross. The spiritual, bodiless Son of God became the embodied, enfleshed, incarnate Son of Mary. In Jesus, God has human flesh, a body, just like you. What could be more profound?

Each week, we'll consider a different aspect of the body of Jesus Christ. What does it mean that, in Jesus, God has hands, feet, lungs, lips, eyes, and ears?

Behold the man! In sermon, in study, in devotion, behold the man!

2019 MIDWEEK LENTEN SERIES: "Behold the Man" – Wednesdays at 6:30 PM

March 6th – *A God Who Hungers*

(Joel 2:12–19; 2 Corinthians 5:20b–6:10; Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21)
(Ash Wednesday Service/Holy Communion)

March 13th – *A God Who Prays*

(Hebrews 7:20–28; John 17:1–26)

March 20th – *A God Beaten*

(Isaiah 52:13–53:12; John 18:19–24)

March 27th – *A God Exposed*

(Genesis 3:7–21; John 19:1–5, 23–24)

April 3rd – *A God with a Mother*

(Revelation 12:1–6; John 19:25–27)

April 10th – *A God Who Thirsts*

(Psalm 22:12–18; John 19:28–30)

LENTEN SUPPERS – The Board of Parish Fellowship is once again going to serve Lenten Suppers. Doors open by 5:00 PM and suppers begin at 5:15 PM. Everyone is encouraged to bring a side dish, dessert, etc., to accompany the meal. Monetary donations are gladly accepted. Come enjoy the fellowship and food!

HERE'S THE MENU:

Wednesday, March 6th – Chicken Soup

Wednesday, March 13th – Tacos

Wednesday, March 20th – Beef Stew

Wednesday, March 27th – Mostaccioli

Wednesday, April 3rd – Fried Chicken

Wednesday, April 10th – Sloppy Joes

ELEVATOR FUND: As of Sunday, January 20th, we have raised **\$28,686.25** for the Elevator Fund. Thanks be to God! To make additional donations, you may use the specially marked white envelopes in the pew racks.

ELEVATOR DEDICATION: The dedication of our elevator addition will take place on **Sunday, February 3, 2019**. We will begin the day with our worship service at **9:00 AM**, followed by the dedication and a reception at **10:30 AM**. Please join us as we celebrate and give thanks to God for His many blessings here at Grace, including our new elevator.

PORTALS OF PRAYER: Quarterly daily devotional books for January through March are available in the narthex. Please help yourself! If you wish to donate to cover the \$5.00 cost per year, please place your gift in the appropriate slot in the narthex. Thanks!

THE GROWING STRONG WITH GRACE group will continue with our monthly meetings on **Wednesday, February 20th**, at **11:00 AM** with Katie Matteson, publisher of "Belle City, Racine's Hometown Magazine," and on **Wednesday, March 20th**, at **11:00 AM** (presenter to be determined). Please bring a dish to pass. Hope you all can make it!

OFFERING STATEMENTS AND ENVELOPES: Your **2018** offering statements and your **2019** offering envelopes are in your mail slots. If you were not issued envelopes and would like some, please contact the church office.

2019 FLOWER CHART is now available for sign up in the narthex. The cost is **\$27.00** for two bouquets. Please make your checks payable to "Grace Lutheran Church" and place in the secretary's box in the Communication Center. To reserve a Sunday, please sign your name and the occasion. Thank you!

DIRECT THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS® by **March 31:** Eligible Thrivent Financial members who have available Choice Dollars® from 2018 have until **March 31, 2019**, to direct them. Don't miss this opportunity to recommend that Thrivent Financial for Lutherans provide funding to Grace Lutheran Church. Call 800-847-4836 and say "Thrivent Choice" after the prompt. Or go to thrivent.com/thriventchoice to learn more.

PARKING LOT: Along with the completion of the elevator project, we have a **new traffic pattern** for the parking lot. (Please see the other side of this page for a diagram.) All vehicles that are using the parking lot/elevator entrance **MUST** come in the parking lot from **Monroe Street** and exit the parking lot on **West Lawn Avenue**. Also, because the number of parking spaces had to be reduced because of the elevator addition, we ask that only those vehicles with handicap permits and those with special needs park in the spaces available. The entire parking lot will be resurfaced and marked appropriately as soon as weather allows this spring. We are very proud of this beautiful addition to our church and thank you all for your patience and support of this project. The Lord has blessed this congregation.

In His Grace – The Elevator Committee

GRACE TOWN HALL: Please join us on **Sunday, March 31st**, for a Grace Town Hall meeting at **10:30 AM**. This meeting is an opportunity for the entire congregation to give their insight and input about the future of Grace and how we can grow as we move ahead to the start of our next century as a church. We hope to see you there!

COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS: Across from the Office Equipment Room, we have set up a box for comments. Thank you for taking the time to put your comments in writing. We request that all comments be placed in a sealed envelope using a label for the Board to which you would like your comments directed. If you are not sure which Board or Committee is most responsible, or if more than one Board might be involved in your suggestion, please choose a "Secretary" label. If you have comments on SEVERAL topics, please submit each on a SEPARATE page (again, in a separate envelope for each involved Board or Committee, etc.).

KWIK TRIP & SPEEDWAY GAS CARDS are for sale in the Office Equipment Room. Grace gets 5% back on all cards sold. Many thanks!

NEWSLETTER DELIVERY: We have discontinued our bulk mailing of the newsletters. We can still mail newsletters via regular postage. However, if you would prefer picking up your newsletter at church, having it emailed to you, or reading it online, please let the church office know. Thank you for your assistance as we attempt to save on mailing and printing costs.