

# February In Touch with Grace



Dear Family and Friends of Grace,  
Lent is early this year . February 14 is Ash Wednesday. Valentine's Day is actually a perfect day to begin Lent as we move towards the greatest gift of love God could give us. Our theme this season will be from Isaiah 61:3a – Beauty for Ashes.

The first two verses of this chapter are quoted by Jesus at the beginning of his public ministry. Jesus was standing in the synagogue and handed the scroll of Isaiah to read. He read the assigned reading of chapter 61, verses 1 & 2.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Then Jesus returned the scroll and sat down. All were amazed. If we read the very next verse, we find our theme for Lent 2024: "To console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes."

There are times in life when we feel lost, in grief, when everything seems to be going wrong,, when there seems to be nothing good and that our efforts, hopes, and dreams are burned up and reduced to ashes. Jesus is saying that he will restore us and bring us beauty from the ashes in our lives.

Ash Wednesday acknowledges this. We confess our sins, we receive a smudge of

ash on our foreheads to remind us of our mortality and that we are dust and to dust we shall return. We hear the promise of Jesus to take those burdens from us and to give us renewal and restoration from even the darkest places. Jesus is with us on our earthly journey.

Our Wednesdays in Lent will focus on the inspirational stories of beauty that has come from the ash heaps of life. We will hear the message of Jesus' love in the midst of the trials we face.

Verse 3 continues: "The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified."

What a vision of hope we find in the journey through these days of Lent. Join us as we encounter the beauty Jesus will bring to each of us – no matter what we face.

May God bless you as you find beauty in ashes and know the love and grace Jesus gives.

Pastor Karen



## Announcements

- Scandinavia Adventures await! Our trip to Norway and Sweden will take place July 18-29, 2024. It is not too late to join us! An informational meeting was held at Grace Lutheran on January 23 but if you missed it, talk to Pastor Karen. There's still time!
- Youth Night - grades 6-12 will be on February 18th. Stay tuned for more info.
- Pancakes and Puppets is scheduled for Sunday, February 25th. With Lent so early this year this event got pushed back a ways but it will happen!! Plan on breakfast and entertainment following worship on this Sunday morning. The youth always do a great job with this event so come and join us!
- Palm Sunday breakfast will be held on March 24th so mark this event on your calendar also!



Lent begins on Ash Wednesday which is February 14th this year. Our Lenten worship schedule this year looks like this:

February 14 - Ash Wednesday Worship at 10:30 am and 6:30 pm

February 21 - Midweek supper and Worship

5:45 pm Soup supper

6:30 pm Worship

February 28 - Midweek supper and Worship

5:45 pm Soup supper

6:30 pm Worship

March 6 - Midweek supper and Worship

5:45 pm Soup supper

6:30 pm Worship

March 13 - Midweek supper and Worship

5:45 pm Soup supper

6:30 pm Worship

March 20 - Midweek supper and Worship

5:45 pm Soup supper

6:30 pm Worship

Palm Sunday - March 24 with Breakfast after Worship

\*Included with this mailing is a postcard with this information - please share it with someone!



## The Lenten Challenge

Join the East Side Collaborative Lutheran churches (Arlington Hills, Grace, Gustavus Adolphus and Our Redeemer) for another great Lenten challenge—similar to last year! It will consist of the 40 days of Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14, and ends on the Saturday (March 30) before Easter Sunday, March 31. During Lent, many people choose to give up something or do something additional to reflect on God's blessings in our lives. We are challenging you to do both! Throughout the 40 days, we will give you suggestions or guidance such as reading a scripture, praying for a specific need, calling a friend or shut-in, listening to a hymn, walking around your neighborhood (or within your building complex), giving up an item from your home to give to someone in need, etc. Coming soon, we will make available a "Challenge" guide along with a paper bag for your donations to be given to the Alley Shoppe at Arlington Hills that has provided clothing and household goods to families in need since 1970.

*Did you know that the 40 days of Lent do not include Sundays? Here's some history: Since all Sundays—and not simply Easter Sunday—were days to celebrate Christ's Resurrection, Christians were forbidden to fast and do other forms of penance on those days. Therefore, when the Church expanded the period of fasting and prayer in preparation for Easter from a few days to 40 days (to mirror Christ's fasting in the desert, before He began His public ministry), Sundays could not be included in the count. Therefore, in order for Lent to include 40 days on which fasting could occur, it had to be expanded to six full weeks (with six days of fasting in each week) plus four extra days—Ash Wednesday and the Thursday, Friday, and Saturday that follow it.*

**Here's an invite from Our Redeemer for all:**



### Bunco Game Night—Friday, February 2

Mark your calendar for another fun night of the game of Bunco to be held at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, 1390 Larpenteur Avenue East, in the Fellowship Hall on Friday, February 2, 6-9 p.m. Even if you haven't played Bunco before, don't hesitate to sign up for a fun game

night and good food. (If you wish, bring a snack to share.

(A small donation of money is always appreciated for the main food item, but not required.) In order to plan on the number of tables and food needed, please RSVP by January 31 to Kathi Kirchoff at [kathik717@hotmail.com](mailto:kathik717@hotmail.com).

## FEBRUARY MISSION OF THE MONTH

February's Mission of the Month at Grace is Operation Smile. While a cleft surgery can transform a child's life in as little as 45 minutes, OS is committed to addressing the patient's cleft care needs throughout their childhood and adolescence so that they can realize happier and healthier futures. The patient may need the care of many specialists who work as a team to ensure the best long-term outcomes. OS's volunteers around the world conduct programs, partner with hospitals, and operate care centers to deliver the ongoing care their patients need and deserve. Specialized care includes surgery, dentistry, nutrition, orthodontics, speech and psychological care.

With more than 6,000 active medical volunteers from all around the world, OS is one of the world's largest volunteer-based nonprofit organizations. Their global movement is made up of people from all walks of life who believe that anyone born with a cleft condition deserves safe, effective and timely surgery and comprehensive care, regardless of where they call home.

Please prayerfully consider making a donation to this established and effective organization which enriches and improves the lives of children around the world. Please use your blue multi-purpose envelope, mark mission of the month and place in the offering plate on Sunday mornings or mail to the church office. Thank you.



## Music Notes -

If you ever sang in a high school or church choir, you might have sung a piece by the composer Alice Parker. I had the privilege of studying with her for a packed 2 weeks several years ago, even spending the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend at her place in New York City which she graciously opened to the students who were far from home. Unfortunately she died on this past Christmas Eve at her home in Hawley, Massachusetts, at the age of 98.

After receiving a double degree in organ and composition at Smith College, she met the famous conductor/composer Robert Shaw while attending Tanglewood. Because of this meeting, she became his assistant for the Robert Shaw Chorale. Along with working as Shaw's assistant, she also wrote 5 operas, 11 song cycles, 33 cantatas, 11 works for chorus and orchestra, 47 chorale suites, and over 40 hymns. If that wasn't enough, she had 5 children. I remember her answering the phone at her apartment, answering "Hello, this is Molly's mom". Rather a normal response for such a noted composer.

Near the beginning of the 2020 documentary *Alice: At Home With Alice Parker*, The film director Eduardo Montes-Bradley asks Alice "Why do we sing?". She responds "'Cause we have to; 'cause birds do. It's built into us. It's a fundamental part of our anatomy. 'Why do we not sing?' is the terrible question now." You can watch the whole film on YouTube to get an insight on this famous and yet down to earth composer.



**American Red Cross**

*Together, we can save a life*

**BLOOD DRIVE COMING MONDAY, FEB.5, 2024:**

The Red Cross national blood supply has fallen in recent weeks. Right now, blood product distributions and hospitals are out-pacing the number of blood donations coming in. Help is needed.

Schedule a blood donation today. Sign up online with the American Red Cross.

Call Carolyn Hesterberg at 651-702-1194 to donate or sign-up to help in the Good Shepherd Lounge.

**FROM THE LIBRARY:**

Thank you to everyone who makes use of the library.

**FICTION**

<u>The Clockmaker's Daughter</u>	Kate Morton
<u>Summer on Blossom Street</u>	Debbie Macomber
<u>Five Quarters of the Orange</u>	Joanne Harris
<u>Silent Partners</u>	Jonathan Kellerman
<u>Loving Frank</u> (Frank Lloyd Wright)	Nancy Horan
<u>Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil</u>	John Berendt

**BOOK CLUB**

<u>Pontoon</u>	Garrison Keillor
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**Grace Book Club -**

Future reads discussion schedule -

Feb. 1	<u>The Lost Girls of Willow Brook</u>	Marie Weisman
Mar. 7	<u>The Silver Ladies of Penny Lane</u>	Dee MacDonald



## XYZ's

We will meet on Thursday, February 8th, at 1:30 pm for a Movie Day. We'll see *Casablanca* (1942, Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman). It's usually at the top or near-the-top of all-time best movie lists. It's also a relatively short movie so we may add in a short comedy film. Movie refreshments will be provided.

Come one, come all! Bring guests! No minimum age requirement!



## Sunday School Update!

The Sunday School is working to make our little corner of the tower room a special place for the kids. In the coming weeks feel free to adventure to the north tower rooms and check out the "about me" wall and get to know the children of Grace a little bit.

Our last Family Game Day was so much fun, that we are working on confirming a date in February for another one. Check the newsletters and bulletins for more details to come. This is for ALL ages, and a great time to spend time together and share a few laughs.

Please keep these upcoming events on your calendar.

February 18th: Church Annual Meeting. We will still have Sunday School

February 25th: Pancakes and Puppets- Sunday School will be watching the Youth Puppet Show

Palm Sunday : March 24th -No Sunday School as there will be the Palm Sunday Breakfast

Easter Sunday: March 31st- No Sunday School. Annual Easter Egg hunt following the service.



## **President's Thoughts -**

Well... it's a new year with many new things happening but with many of the same patterns and traditions keeping us grounded. It is February and a leap year and Easter is early which makes Lent early. Ash Wednesday is February 14th so settles a somber mood on Valentine's Day. Christ's trials are remembered during this season of introspection and recognition of our mortality, but we also realize the love it took for God to sacrifice His son for our redemption. And isn't 'love' what Valentine's Day is all about? We can honor both as our Lenten theme of "beauty for ashes" so appropriately demonstrates. Join us for all the experiences of the Lenten season, both the solemnity and the celebration of love.

February brings the 'Souper Bowl of Caring' and our Mardi Gras celebration on the same day as Super Bowl LVIII. We will soon know who the 2 teams are that will play in that game. We will celebrate all of these things with a 'wager' of donations to the local food bank for the team we think should win the game. The winners are those who frequent the food banks as all donations will go to Merrick. Come join the fun and bring your favorite Awesome Appetizer or Decadent Dessert to share at our Mardi Gras Celebration that same morning at Fellowship Time!

February also bring the second part of our Annual Meeting. This will happen on Sunday, February 18th, during Fellowship time. This is the part of the Annual Meeting where we accept reports from our Bishop, Pastor, President, all of our committees and the financial report for 2023. We will also be voting on representatives to our conference and Synod assembly meetings. This year we have the opportunity to send up to 6 members to the Conference assembly on February 24th and 3 voting delegates to the Synod Assembly in May. If you are interested in either of these opportunities to be more involved in the greater ELCA church, please speak to Pastor Karen or myself. We would be thrilled to have you.

As for new beginnings with our property, we are awaiting the final steps to receiving the compensation check from the Met Council for the Gold Line easements, etc. This should be coming during February sometime. We will be asking for congregational input regarding investment of this income.

Also, things are changing quickly on the lower level of our building. LSS has hired a general contractor and they are proceeding with demolition and will be working on plumbing, electrical, etc. very shortly. Please do not stray into this area as it is a construction zone. Lots of dust and many things to trip on means the fewer people wandering around the better. Progress is being made and we give thanks for the upgrades.

As we travel through these changes, please do not hesitate to ask questions or offer insights. This is pretty new to all of us and we travel together with God beside us.

Blessings to all!

Linda Sackreiter, Congregation President

**Annual Meeting, Part II - Sunday, February 18, at 10:30 am.**

# Community Connections - ongoing projects!!

## Internal, Local and Global

**This year** we continue to support the Every Meal Program at Nokomis Montessori School on White Bear Ave. and Fremont.

We have also distributed some of our collected winter hats, scarves, boots, etc. to the kids there. They are always looking for new or gently used winter gear - esp. snow pants, boots, mittens, gloves. We will put a bin out in the Good Shepherd Lounge if you would like to donate. Thank you!

**If you would consider serving treats** on a Sunday morning, we would appreciate your help. Please take a look at the sign-up schedule in the South Tower room and see if there is a date that works for you to help out! Thank you!

### 2024 Collections

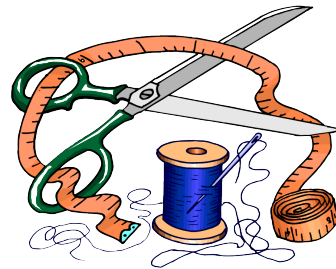
**Quilts, baby care kits** (Note: soap size accepted for baby care kits is 3.5 or 4 oz gentle soap; soap in each kit has to total 8 or 9 oz) We are planning to deliver many quilts and layettes to LWR this year and have already made 20 quilts and have several items for layettes ready to put together.

Other on-going collections at Grace - used eye glasses and cancelled stamps. Please find the small collection baskets on the library shelf. Also, Sandy Abernathy will take any American Flags that need to be disposed of properly. These can be left in the collection area in the library. Thank you for all



**Quilt Days**— February sew days will be the 10th and 24th from 10-12. All are welcome to join us. No skills necessary, we will teach.

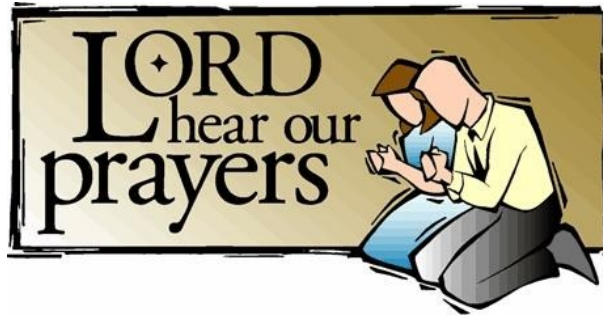
Most months we will meet on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays in the Tower rooms. Come join us for some conversation and to put those hands to use for a wonderful cause. Lutheran World Relief distributes donated quilts all over the world including in the US.



**Miles of Pennies** The large collection jar in the library is always accepting donations toward giving to the LSS fund for helping homeless Youth in St. Paul. Our goal is \$250.00 for 2024. We sent a check for \$255.00 to LSS in 2023. Let's exceed that in 2024! Thank you to everyone who participates in this important mission. Your generous donations of pennies and coins are appreciated.







**We lift our prayers to God** in times of thanksgiving and times of need, in times of joy and times of sorrow. This month we especially pray for Art Skauge, Bev Henderson, Jeanne Soban, (Marlene Hockbein's sister), Carol Anderson, Butch Nelson, and all those we name in our hearts.

**How to donate without an offering plate:**

There is always snail mail. The office is open to receive the mail and our bookkeeper will count what comes in each week and deposit it in the bank. Our address: 1730 Old Hudson Road, St. Paul, 55106.

To donate electronically: You can schedule a transfer of funds with your own bank if they have bill pay available and it will come automatically on the date you choose. Otherwise, you can go to our website ([www.gracelutheranstpaul.org](http://www.gracelutheranstpaul.org)) and click on the GIVE page.

This site is secure for financial transactions through Vanco which is the Simply Giving program. At the GIVE page you can go through the steps as directed and give whatever amount you wish to several different categories (general, mortgage, etc.) This works best on the Firefox or Edge browsers. This does get to us electronically in a very timely manner. If you are comfortable using the QR, it will take you directly to the GIVE page on the website. **Please call the office if you have any questions.** Thank you.

Give QR



**Financial Snapshot for GLC-2023**

	<u>December Actual</u>	<u>YTD Actual</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>
General Fund	\$28,689.26	\$ 246,566.78	\$263,033.27
Expenses	\$24,143.92	\$ 319,736.40	\$297,094.92
Deficit/Overage	\$ 3,870.01	-\$76,169.62	-\$34,061.65



## To Those Born in February!

1 Dorothy Roeske  
3 Marlene Hockbein  
8 Nick Williams  
9 Gary Petersen  
Ethan Taylor  
10 Dustin Dorma  
11 Kayla Revier  
13 Larry Denson  
Karen Williams  
14 Chris Runquist  
15 Wehso Cooper  
16 Carol Golder  
17 Jeffrey Adam  
18 Cindy Schaaf II  
Patricia Sabo

20 Jonathan Rose  
25 Christopher Scherer  
27 John Armstrong  
Kari Heifort  
Tammy Mohn  
28 Emma-Lee Engh  
Sig Johnson  
Solomon Marquart  
Sue Wickert



# Worship Leaders for February 2024-

<u>Date</u>	<u>Liturgist</u>	<u>Acolyte</u>	<u>Lay Reader</u>
4	Peter Zitzewitz	Alexis Petersen	Bob Golder
11	Monique McClure-Hegge	Kaliska Reed	Barb Holtan
14	Char House		Linda Sackreiter
	Jan Steingas	Tony Childs	Carol Golder
18	Ron House	Will Kinney	Keith Smeby
25	Connie Smeby	Cami Alleman	Carolyn Hesterberg

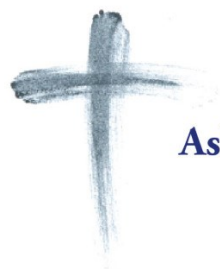
<u>Date</u>	<u>Ushers</u>
4	Team B Rick Major, Julie Major
11	Team C Brian Jackson, Lydia Rose, Violet Rose
14	10:30 am
	6:30 pm
18	Team D Randy Nikula, Jonathan and Josh Williams
25	Team E Jeff Oberlander, Anne Oberlander, Dave Oberlander

<u>Date</u>	<u>Money Counters</u> - (we could use some additional volunteers on our counting teams)
4	Kate Pray team
11	Amanda Christie team
18	Monique McClure-Hegge team
25	Kate Pray team



Grace Lutheran Church  
1730 Old Hudson Road  
Saint Paul, MN 55106

Ash Wednesday is February 14th!



**Ash Wednesday**  
— Lent Begins

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**Phone: 651-774-9617**

**FAX: 651-774-0006**

**[www.gracelutheranstpaul.org](http://www.gracelutheranstpaul.org)**  
**[gracelutheranstpaul@gmail.com](mailto:gracelutheranstpaul@gmail.com)**

**Pastor:**

Rev. Karen Williams

**Custodial Staff:**

Larry and Linda Denson

**Office Staff:**

Linda Sackreiter

**Music Staff:**

Russ Carlson—Director of Music  
Ministries

Kathleen Hollar—Organist

Jan Steingas—Triple G's

Russ Carlson—Bells of Grace

Connie Smeby—Joyous Juniors



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“He fasted for forty days  
*and* forty nights...”