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# March In Touch with Grace



Dear Family and friends of Grace,

We are in the midst of Lent. A few weeks ago on Valentine's Day, we heard the words: "Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return." It's a sobering reminder of the passing of life. No matter how rich or poor someone is, we all face the same fate at the end of our journey on earth. A musician named Kerry Livgren of the American rock band Kansas was practicing his guitar one day and the song 'Dust in the Wind' came to him. The lyrics have a philosophical view of life – money, possessions, buildings, and our mortality all crumble to dust eventually. The song shows plainly the inevitable and fleeting essence of our existence, symbolizing our lives and achievements as mere dust in the wind. The lyrical narrative illustrates the temporality of our dreams, actions, and everything we cling to will eventually be gone. "Dust in the wind; all they are is dust in the wind."

Interestingly, Kerry didn't want to share the song he had composed with his band mates, but at the encouragement of his wife, he shared it reluctantly - and they loved it. Dust in the Wind was recorded in 1977 and became the best-selling record that Kansas ever recorded. Kerry became a Christian a few years later.

The theme of this song resonates with many of us at one time or another especially during Lent. We might wonder at times what is this life all about? Why am I here and what difference does my life make? We find the theme of dust or ashes ties into scripture from Genesis and also Ecclesiastes as well as a few Psalms. Even with the truth of these lyrics, we know the rest of the story. We are beloved children of God. We have been given gifts and abilities to make God's world a better place. Scripture tells us that out of the dust and ashes of

our lives, God will create something beautiful and at the end of our lives, we are brought to our heavenly home, to the place prepared for us. (John 14)

Our theme this Lent is just that thought which is found in the book of Isaiah, chapter 61, verse 3: God will give beauty for ashes. Each Wednesday in Lent, we are looking at some of the great hymns of promise that have come out of desperate times, when all the world seemed like dust in the wind for each composer. Join us for soup suppers and worship each Wednesday in March. Also, on the first Sunday in March and again in April, we will look at our own legacies in a two part series. Who will remember us, how do we want to be remembered, what will we leave behind for others that will create a more beautiful world? We will look at funeral planning, end of life decisions, medical directives, and more. Join us so that together, we will remember that the Lord has promised us more than just dust in the wind, for you are loved and you matter.

God's peace and blessings to you this season,  
Pastor Karen



## Announcements

- Camp Onomia brochures are available with descriptions of another great summer at camp! Pick one up and see where you and your family will fit in. There are programs for all ages. A new offering this year is Art Adventure for all ages. Getting away from the city and experiencing God in the beauty of nature is one of the best ways to refresh and renew your faith. Early bird deadline expires on March 15 so get your registrations in to escape to this wonderful church camp.
- Palm Sunday Brunch will be served after worship by our Youth Families on Palm Sunday, March 24<sup>th</sup>. Please join us and support our youth ministries!
- Talk Points – March 3 & April 7 – Dust in the Wind? What will my legacy be? Join us for a discussion of end of life planning in two parts. Part 1 on March 3 will begin the initial discussion and planning. April 7 will be a conclusion with a final packet of materials. Join us!!!

**Don't forget Daylight Saving Time begins on March 10th. Spring forward!!**



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

Maundy Thursday - March 28 Worship at 10:30am & 6:30 pm  
XYZ Potluck following 10:30 service

Good Friday - March 29 - 7:00 pm Worship  
Arlington Hills Lutheran - 1115 Greenbrier Ave.

Easter morning worship - March 31 at 10:30 am

followed by an Easter Egg Hunt!



## 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.*

### **MARCH MISSION OF THE MONTH**

The mission of the month for March at Grace is Every Meal. Every Meal was established to provide meals to children who face food insecurities over the weekend. Minnesota students receive free breakfast and lunch at school Monday through Friday but often go without much to eat over the weekend.

Food items are packed at the warehouse in Roseville and discretely placed in child's backpack on the day before the weekend. Anyone interested in volunteering may call the church office.

The closest school to Grace which benefits from this program is Nokomis Montessori South Campus on White Bear Ave. and Third St.

Please prayerfully consider reaching out to local students who face hunger over the weekend so they can arrive at school Monday morning prepared to learn. Your donation in any amount can make a difference.

Please use your blue multi purpose envelope, mark Mission of the month and place in the offering or mail to the church office. Checks should be made payable to Grace. Thank you.



Every Meal

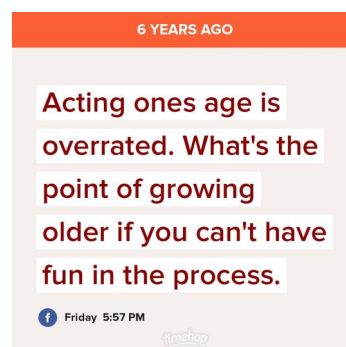
Fighting Child Hunger

## Music Notes -

Starting the first Friday of January, I have been taking a course called "The Theology of Hymns". We have worked our way through a rather thick textbook called "Sing with Understanding" by C. Michael Hawn. It tackles all the major sections of denominational hymnals, including ours. As our final project, we were asked to (voluntarily) add a section that is not covered in the textbook, which would include hymn suggestions. I chose to present hymns on the aging process. All of us do it—until we don't. In the back of our hymnal, found on page 1184, is a list of hymns recommended under the title **Journey, Pilgrimage** which help immensely, but don't necessarily highlight the various stages. The following is a portion of the paper I submitted, including a list of hymns that I recommended.

Within most hymnals can be found sections containing hymns concerning hope, trust, witnessing, commitment and praise, along with highlighting the various seasons of the church year. These hymns are helpful to sustain our daily lives. Many of the hymns are restatements of psalms; many are commentaries on our relationship with God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit. But what about hymns that acknowledge our aging process and the various stages of attaining it? Concerning advanced age, Proverbs 16:31 says, "Gray hair is a crown of splendor; it is attained in the way of righteousness". In Psalm 92:14 we are reminded, "They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green". Comfort comes in Isaiah's words found in chapter 46, verse 4, "Even to your old age and gray hairs I am He, I am He who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you". These are words that need to be reinforced throughout the various stages of the journey.

The two hymns I examined for their emphasis on the journey were "I Was There to Hear Your Borning Cry" and "Lord of All Hopefulness", each going through the stages of life. A hymn with a familiar tune but new words that was also highlighted was #792, "When Memory Fades", which focuses on the loss of memory, vision being affected and sometimes fact recall being fuzzy. Check it out. Mary Bringle has done a good job on capsulizing some interesting points - been there, done that moments.



## FROM THE LIBRARY:

Thank you to everyone who makes use of the library.

### NEW BOOKS

A Rose Remembered Michael Phillips

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close Jonathan Foer

### YOUNG ADULT

Island of the Blue Dolphins Yaa Gyasi

### FICTION - Donations from Elvira Grundman

WAR SERIES by Maureen Lang

Look to the East, France 1914

Whisper on the Wind, Belgium 1916

Springtime of the Spirit, Germany 1918

Then Sings My Soul, Hymn history Robert Morgan

New Children's Books will be listed in April.



## Grace Book Club -

Future reads discussion schedule -

Mar. 7      The Silver Ladies of Penny Lane    Dee MacDonald

**XYZ's**    March's meeting will be our traditional Maundy Thursday Potluck! This year Easter is early so Maundy Thursday falls on March 28th. The morning worship service is scheduled for 10:30 am and we will gather after that in the Tower room for lunch. Bring your favorite potluck dish to share. Everyone is welcome to stay after worship. No age limit for this gathering. Plates, napkins, utensils, coffee and drinks will be supplied. Please join us!

## **Sunday School Update!**

February has been an exciting month. We learned about the many miracles performed by Jesus and the beatitudes. We also made Valentine's for those at the Mardi Gras celebration, and got to join in on the music and treats. Pancakes and Puppets was a blast, and what a fun tradition that we all look forward to. So proud of the confirmation youth and thankful to the families for all the time and dedication they put into this event.



Looking forward to March, we have a busy month of preparing for Easter. Remember to stay after the Easter Sunday service for the Annual Easter Egg Hunt!!

Please keep these upcoming events on your calendar.

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 -**

Another month has flown by and I have no new words to express my amazement at the speed at which this keeps happening. WOW! Well we are actually approaching Spring and not just having springlike weather. Easter is really early this year which makes the effect of time flying even more obvious. Also this month, Daylight Savings Time reappears on March 10th! Always a sign of spring approaching. Another sign of time passing is the number of funerals and memorial services we have hosted in the past few months. Let's hope we get a pause from that activity for a time.

Our remodeling in the lower level moves on. They have completed the demo they needed to do and have moved on to sheet rocking new walls and working on the air handlers. They have picked out carpet and paint colors as well as tile for the prep kitchen and bathrooms. They are on schedule to complete the project on time.

Grace is experiencing decreased giving again this winter. Hopefully that will not be a continuing trend. We paid off the mortgage but that doesn't mean we don't have any bills. Utility prices have gone up as have insurance costs and many other services. I realize that household costs have also gone up by a lot so am just putting out a little reminder that the church also feels the cost escalation.

Having said that, I want to assure everyone that we appreciate all of you and the gifts you bring to your Grace family. That includes your smiling face on Sunday morning as well as your work on behalf of all of our committees and your quirky sense of humor if that is your gift. All that and more are the gifts that make up this family at Grace. We miss you when you are not here and we sometimes worry but we always appreciate whatever gifts that come from you. Please let me know if there is a gift you wish to use which we currently don't have an avenue for. We can work with you to see where it might fit. Thank you for being part of my family here at Grace.

May will bring the 2nd Annual Rhubarb Festival on the 18th. The proceeds this year will go to helping Our Redeemer Lutheran fund their weekly To-Go Food Shelf called "Community Sharing". See how you can get involved in this project!

God's blessing to you as we approach this season of rebirth and renewal!

Linda Sackreiter, Congregational President

## **Expression of Gratitude -**

"We would like to thank the congregation of Grace for all the prayers, cards, and well wishes for my sister, Jeanne Soban, during her journey with cancer and subsequent death".

Marlene Hockbein

Diane Black

Bill Black

# 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 Third Street.

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.

**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

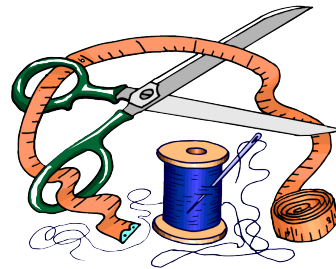
*Quilts, baby care kits* (Note: soap size accepted for baby care kits is 3.5 or 4 oz gentle soap; soap in each kit has to total 8 or 9 oz) We are planning to deliver many quilts and layettes to LWR this year and have already made 20 quilts and have several items for layettes ready to put together.

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**— March sew days will be the 9th and 23rd from 10-12. All are welcome to join us. No skills necessary, we will teach.

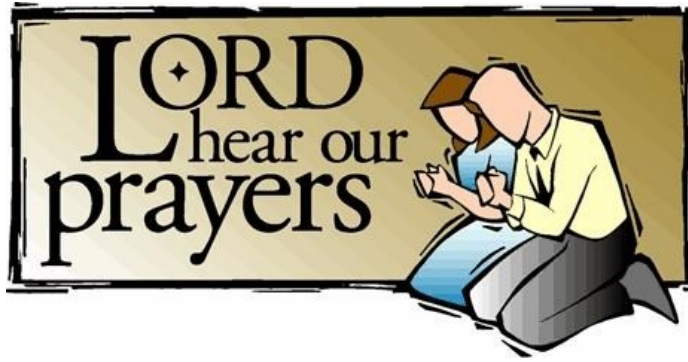
Most months we will meet on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays in the Tower rooms. Come join us for some conversation and to put those hands to use for a wonderful cause. Lutheran World Relief distributes donated quilts all over the world including in the US.



**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. Let's exceed that in 2024! Thank you to everyone who participates in this important mission. Your generous donations of pennies and coins are







**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 Pete Wickert, Bev Henderson, Carol Anderson, Butch Nelson, and all those we name in our hearts.

**How to donate other than in the 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, other, 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>January Actual</u>	<u>YTD Actual</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>
General Fund	\$14,082.22	\$ 14,082.22	\$20,258.75
Expenses	\$24,139.34	\$ 24,139.34	\$24,366.23
Deficit/Overage	- \$ 10,057.12	-\$10,057.12	-\$4,107.48



## To Those Born in March!

2	Luke Runquist	21	Susan Atneosen
5	Anne Oberlander		Luke Christie
	Jennifer Trulen	22	Margaret Swenson
6	Isaiah Ray-Taylor	23	Danita Hanson
	Joseph Sabo	24	Thomas Rose
7	Wyatt Wood	25	Debra Duke
8	Christiana Ray-Taylor		Barb Kinney
10	Pam Trulen	26	Kathleen Voss
11	Karen Doree	27	Susan Brown
	Peter Hultgren		Carol Westling
12	Sally Pearson	28	Jeffrey Scherer
	Nancy Zitzewitz		Jan Steingas
14	Paul Hesterberg	29	Karen Olson
16	Olivia Childs	30	Josh Wickert
	Pat Flores	31	Judy Adam
	Lexi Revier		Cynthia Wood
	London Trulen		
19	Dakota Reed		



# Worship Leaders for March 2024 -

<u>Date</u>	<u>Liturgist</u>	<u>Acolyte</u>	<u>Lay Reader</u>
3	Jeff Oberlander	Will Kinney	Sig Johnson
10	Barb Holtan	Kaliska Reed	Josie Meyer
17	Jan Steingas	Tony Childs	Linda Sackreiter
24	Monique McClure-Hegge	Will Kinney	Bob Golder
28 10:30 am	Char House		Carol Golder
6:30 pm	Jeff Oberlander	Cami Alleman	Barb Holtan
31 10:30 am	Pete Zitzewitz	Kaliska Reed	Carolyn Hesterberg

<u>Date</u>	<u>Ushers</u> (the families of the acolytes are also helping out)
3	Peter Hultgren, Linda Denson
11	Brian Jackson, Patty Young, Chris and Kristen Wintheiser
17	Karin Nikula, Bob Golder
24	Norm Walby, Ron House, Ron Swenson
31	Lydia Rose, Violet Rose

<u>Date</u>	<u>Money Counters</u> - (we could use some additional volunteers on our counting teams)
3	Amanda Christie team
10	Monique McClure-Hegge team
17	Kate Pray team
24	Amanda Christie team
31	Monique McClure-Hegge team



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

Easter is March 31st!!



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**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

