



Lutheran Church

**FEBRUARY
2012**

LOG Newsletter

MAKING JESUS CHRIST KNOWN
TO SHARE OUR LORDS LOVE AND GRACE WITH ALL PEOPLE



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FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Recently I've been thinking about the use the phrase "all are welcome" on church publicity materials and web sites. We do it, as does pretty much every church I know. Even if they don't say it, they never say something contradictory, like "only some people welcome here" or "interview here first to see if you're welcome material" Yet it seems that as easy as that phrase is to say, it's much harder to put into action.

Take, for example, the whole issue of welcoming convicts released from prison. Some may have greater offenses than others, but 98% of all convicts will be freed eventually. And, with almost 5% of the country in prison at any given time, that adds up to a lot of people with a past. Are they welcome? Really? Or are we thinking, in the back of our minds, "I didn't mean *them*..."

What about those whose political views are opposite ours? Or those who have a radically different lifestyle, even one we don't approve of? Or those we don't even like? I could go on.

It's not as easy as it sounds to welcome all. That means that we would be just as excited to see at worship (or any ministry) someone who has no money at all as someone with tons. We would invite the homeless family to brunch as willingly as the ones with nicer clothes.

But that is not always how the church works. In the book of James, they have this exact problem:

James 2:1-4 My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? ² For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, ³ and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here, please," while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand there," or, "Sit at my feet," ⁴ have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

We can easily scoff at the people in James' church, but we're human beings. We live in a world that makes distinctions, and we have mixed motives that sometimes we don't even understand

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Sunday Worship
8:15 - Traditional
10:45 - Contemporary

LORD OF GRACE STAFF

Lord of Grace Lutheran Church is a congregation of the Grand Canyon Synod of the Evangelical Church of America.
(www.elca.org)

The newsletter is designed and edited by Len Mowinski. Submissions may be edited for space. Send contributions to lmowinski@comcast.net or the church office.

Staff

Lars Hammar: Senior Pastor
Dani Anich: Administrative Assistant
Dawn Calkins: Adult Choir
April McDaniel: Preschool Director
Erin Draper: Nursery Coordinator
Todd Martin: Organist/Piano
Jacob Acosta: Praise Team
Lisa Parks: Bookkeeper
Thomas Winiger: Chancel Choir

Elected Council Members

Carolyn Bernheim: President
Cheryl Fitch: Vice-President
Steve Mankee: Treasurer
Laurie O'Brien: Education
Lisa Rynda: Youth
Erin Martin: Fellowship
Dan Sherry: Evangelism
Jim Dahnke: Property
Cindy Stein: Worship

Committee Chairs

Charlie Motzko: Technology
Lori Brown: Financial Secretary
Dino Revie: Website
Rita Spindler: Prayer Chain
Melissa Elias: Preschool Committee
Laurie O'Brien and Charlene DeWitt:
MOPS Coordinator

consciously. The ex-con scares us, the poor person doesn't have money to give us to pay our bills. But the person with money, that benefits us as a church to get them to join. A few more families like that and we might pay off the mortgage. A few more homeless people and, well, we'll still have that mortgage for a few more years.

There are many arguments used to justify not welcoming all equally. Some say that there are safety concerns, or that certain churches just aren't "equipped" to deal with "certain people," or that discrimination is something we do to ourselves – the whole "birds of a feather" logic that says that people really only want to be with people like themselves – regardless of welcome. We can't, of course, always tell the back story of a person by clothes and language and outside factors (many very dangerous people look very professional), but it doesn't mean our minds don't go there.

And then what do you do when some people say that they just aren't comfortable being at a church with "those people" – whoever they are – and will just have to go somewhere else if "they" start filling the pews. Now you're going to lose either way, in effect making a decision that will cause someone to leave: so who has to go? Politically, those already here have the edge over those who are new, so to protect the institution the new people are given a less-than-enthusiastic welcome.

And yet, there's another side to it that makes things complicated. All people are welcome, but not all behaviors are. You can be of any income, but you can't run around destroying things or attacking people. In theory, you shouldn't be able to run around gossiping or forming exclusive power cliques or playing manipulative games, but churches don't always have the best track record for enforcing that.

So we say that all are welcome, but you're not welcome to do whatever you want. But this gets tricky too. How do we define this? Egregious crimes, sure. But what about politics, ideology, theology? How much do you have to agree to be welcome as a full member? How much disagreement do we allow? Are you welcome only until you change to become like us? Churches are accused of loving you as you are only for a probationary period, at which point you need to get with the program. But certainly, the Gospel is transformative, and changes us, so shouldn't we expect some conformity at some point? But in what ways? If you look at Jesus' own ministry, he seemed both very welcoming and very exclusive at the same time. On the one hand, his own followers were a mixed lot, of those who seemed very upright (Nathanael, in whom there is no deceit), those with no

money (Mary Magdalene), those with radical political agendas and violent pasts (Judas Iscariot and Simon the Zealot), and those who were loaded with cash (like Matthew the tax collector and Mary and Martha). His followers were a diverse bunch. And yet, many people who came to follow him were flat out turned away and told to go home, while others were given huge conditions to meet first, like the rich man who was told to sell all his possessions and give them to the poor.

I have come to the conclusion that Jesus was perfectly willing to turn away those who were going to try to hijack his ministry, control his agenda, or try to dictate how things would be done. He was comfortable turning away those who were not ready, or who were too attached to worldly things. But, those are behavioral criteria, and they were never permanent. The rich man could have sold his stuff and come back. It was his choice. But he didn't want to make it.

Which is why we will always need to keep revisiting the question of welcome. We will probably never do it perfectly well, and will inevitably fall back into thinking of welcoming (and evangelism in general) as getting people to support our church institution, rather than a purely selfless act of trying to spread the Gospel for the sake of the kingdom, regardless of the cost/benefit for us. But if we are going to say "all are welcome", we will need to always stand convicted before those words, re-evaluating and praying and asking again and again for God's guidance to do as Jesus did. Some may not want to follow Christ, or may not be willing to act in a manner that's conducive to life in community. There is nothing we can do. We can't change the Gospel. But we can try to live it like Christ did, and truly, actively, welcome all – not as the world welcomes, but as Jesus did.

Peace,

Pastor Lars

COUNCIL ELECTIONS

It is time for the nomination committee to start the work of finding members to serve in council positions opening up this year. Four positions are coming open and include President, Liaison for Education, Liaison for Property and Liaison for Worship. The election will take place in May at the annual meeting and those elected will serve a two year term. More information will be coming out on this. In the mean time, please prayerfully consider whether you are called to serve the congregation in one of these positions.

Happy Birthday, Arizona!

In *Dry River: Stories of Life, Death and Redemption on the Santa Cruz*, Southern Arizona author Ken Lambertson explores the river's history, culture, ecology and aesthetics. On Sat., Feb. 25, from 10-11:30 a.m., he will discuss his "compelling work of hope and celebration," at Lutheran Church of the Foothills, 5102 N. Craycroft Road. The event is free and open to the public. For more information, contact Pastor Bonnie Pene (299-5631, pastorbonnie@foothillslutheran.org).

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Also, we are having a fundraiser pancake breakfast on January 29th in between services. Please come hungry and support our ministry! And, we still have Papa Murphy's discount cards available for \$10, there is over \$30 worth of savings on each card! Let me know if you would like one, **Laurie at 572-8556.**

BIBLE STUDY WITH PASTOR LARS CONTINUES

Join Pastor Lars for a review of Lutheranism, starting with our beginnings in the Reformation of the 1500's through today. The class is open to all who want to refresh their knowledge of the tradition, or who are new to the Lutheran church and want to learn more. Classes will include: Watching a PBS documentary on Martin Luther, review of some of Luther's personal writings, explore the Augsburg Confession (our Lutheran doctrine) and some of the landscape of Lutheranism in America and the world today.

Identical classes will be offered at 9:30 am at 6:30 pm on Thursdays.

Dates are: **February 2, 9, 16, 23; March 1**

MOPS

MOPS are going strong this year, filled with great discussions, devotionals, speakers and crafts as usual. We welcome all mothers of children birth through kindergarten to join us the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays in the fellowship hall from 9:15 – 11:15. If your children are older, we would love to have you join us as a mentor mom, we could always use the perspective of a mother who has been through this stage of mothering. Your meeting fee is waived; you will just pay the MOPS International registration fee. We are on a holiday break now and will resume our meetings on January 4th. We could always use more childcare help. If you are interested in helping out 2 or 4 hours a month to this ministry (or know anyone who is able to), please call me, Laurie, at 572-8556. Our childcare program is an important part of the success of MOPS and we always need help!

EDUCATION UPDATE

□
Sunday school and Kids Chat are back in session after a Christmas break. We are having great attendance and are so thankful to have your kids join us each week. It is a lot of fun for them and us! We will begin preparing for Vacation Bible School soon, so look for meeting announcements in the near future. The time is upon us. If you would like to help out with Sunday school, kids chat or VBS, please call me, **Laurie, at 572-8556** with any questions.

KID'S CLUB

Kid's Club is back this spring. On the first and 3rd Fridays (most months) we have crafts, activities, games, and Bible-based fun for all kids in grades k-6. Every other time we offer a movie night or other activity. From 6pm - 8pm, it's a great way for kids to have fun at the end of the week, and for parents to get a couple hours of break. Contact Anette Jones or Lisa Rynda for more information.

Spring schedule for kids club:

Jan 6
Jan 20 (tentative)
Feb 3
Feb 17 - movie
Mar 2
Mar 16 - movie
Apr 20
May 4
May 18 - movie
Jun1

BIRTHDAYS

Don Lawler 2/1
Katherine Andrews 2/2
Margaret Windes 2/2
Kim George 2/3
Stan Bernheim 2/4
Aline Horan 2/6
Corliss Jenkins Sherry 2/6
Phyllis Teager 2/6
Joy Fowler 2/7
Brad Hustad 2/7
Paulette Claver 2/8
Jim Fowler 2/9
Josh Johnson 2/9
Mykel Frank 2/10
Amber George 2/10
Beverly Kesler 2/11
Hanna Sines 2/12
Brett Johnson 2/13
Ken Ledbetter 2/13
Francisco Saenz 2/13
Joanne Ash 2/14
Chad Martin 2/15
Guthrie Frank 2/17
Andrew Martin 2/18
Joan Triumph 2/21
Stephen Borstad 2/24
Noelle Stewart 2/26
Shannon Thomas 2/26

ANNIVERSARIES

Floyd and Pat Nelson 58 years

Marc and Kimberly Maisto 14 years

Candace and Stephen Borstad 43 years

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

From time to time members of the congregation develop concerns about a ministry, changes in church routines, administrative functions of the church, etc. Council feels it is important to provide concerned members with an effective way to be heard and have their concerns addressed. The church has a great mechanism already in place to do this – the church council. The members of the church council represent the various ministries and also oversee administrative functions of the church. One of their responsibilities is to bring member concerns to council so that all members have a voice in church matters. They can't do this if they don't hear from members. If you have a concern or a compliment for that matter, the most effective way to be heard is to contact the council member responsible for that ministry area. Talk to the council president or vice president if you can't figure out exactly who to speak to. The council person will discuss the issue with you (they may invite another council member to join the discussion). The council person will listen and help you decide what the next step is. They will pray with you about your concerns. The council person may feel they should take the issue directly to the council. They may suggest that another council person needs to hear what you have to say. If the issue is something Pastor can help with or is involved in, they will set up a meeting with you, the council members assisting you and Pastor to discuss it with him. The bottom line is they will ensure that your voice is heard by the people who can best address your concern.

Council knows that even small concerns not addressed properly can grow into larger issues that create unease in the congregation. Council strongly feels that the council structure is the most effective way to ensure that all member concerns are addressed. When concerns arise in the future please use your council to help you address them.

Project Hospitality

God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. 1 Peter 4:10

THANK YOU to all who transported the guests to and from the Salvation Army, spent the nights, and prepared the dinners, breakfasts, and lunches. It is an awesome feeling to reach out and share with those less fortunate than us our time, talents, and treasures. I'm not sure who received the greatest amount of joy from these events, the guests or the volunteers. Either way the Lord has blessed us all in a very special way.

The remaining dates are February, 8-9, and Friday, February 17-18 2012

If you have any questions, please contact Mike Stein 579-0083. We still have a few volunteer slots open for the January and February.

Dust Off Your Golf Clubs!

The Ninth Annual

***"Fund for Leaders in Mission (FLIM)
Golf Classic"***

A Golf Benefit for Future Pastors

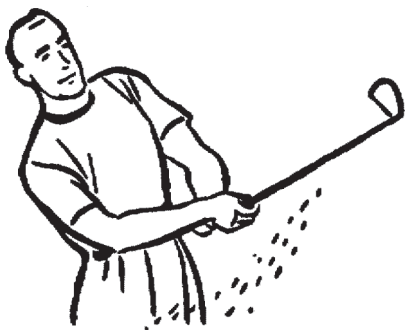
**Monday, April 9, 2012, Noon Shotgun
Start**

Oro Valley Country Club

Questions? Email/call **Pr. Ken Ahlstrand,**
Coordinator

pasken@comcast.net

520/481-4536



Women of Lord of Grace Carol Buuck

Save the Date: March 3, 2012 from 7-9:00 for The Women of Lord of Grace breakfast and fellowship. The event is designed as a time for you to relax, enjoy fellowship and be inspired. Women and girls of all ages are invited.

Look for more details in the bulletin, LOG-in, email and next month's newsletter. Hope to see you all there!

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PRESENTATION

On February 19 our adult forum at 9:30 will have a discussion of an important topic for Christians, the relationships of religious faith and science. It will be led by George Murphy, a Lutheran pastor with a doctorate in physics. He has long been active in science-religion dialogue, and is a member of the ELCA's Alliance on Faith, Science and Technology. We will talk about some basic questions, like "How do we understand the world?" and "How does God act in the world today?" and will get into some topics that sometimes arouse controversy, such as the origin of the universe, evolution, and genetic engineering. Questions and comments will be welcomed.

WORSHIP EVENTS UPDATE

Cindy Stein

February 22, 2012 - Ash Wednesday services will be held at noon and 6:30 p.m.

February 29, 2012 - Lenten services start and will be held each Wednesday night through March 28, 2012 with dinner starting at 6:00 pm and services starting at 6:30 pm.

April 1, 2012 - Palm Sunday services will be held at 8:15 am and 10:45 am and will begin in the church courtyard.

April 5, 2012 - Maundy Thursday service will be held at 7:00 pm

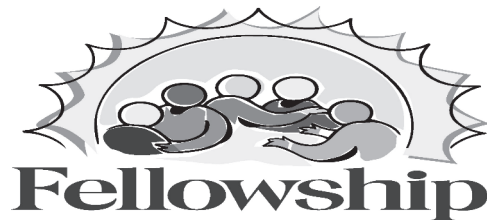
April 6, 2012 - Good Friday services will be held at noon and 7:00 pm

April 8, 2012 - Easter services will be at sunrise (time to be determined), 8:15 and 10:45

May 27, 2012 - Combined worship service at 10:00

July 29, 2012 - Combined worship service at 10:00

Please note there is a sign-up sheet on the corkboard in the Narthex for those would like to donate money for flowers for the Sunday morning services. As we get closer to Easter there will also be a sign-up sheet for those who would like to donate to purchasing Easter Lilies.



Coffee Hour - We need volunteers to host coffee hour. It's super simple and doesn't take much time. If you are interested, please write your name on the calendar posted on the cork board just outside the kitchen in the Fellowship Hall. Please consider bringing cookies, muffins, doughnuts, pastries, etc. to share. You can also contact Erin Martin for any questions you may have. Thank you!

Committee Meeting - Sunday, February 12 @ 9:30am in the Narthex - Open to anyone who would like to help out with Fellowship events!!

Lenten Suppers - will begin Wednesday, Feb. 29. We are looking for several ministries to host one supper each week. Thank you, Men's Group and MOPS for volunteering. If your ministry would be interested, please contact Erin Martin for more details.

Fundraiser/Family Game Night - Keep Saturday, Mar 3 open! More details to come...

Contact Erin Martin (wake_mom@msn.com or 572-0068) for questions or suggestions. Thank you!

WATER! (WE TAKE IT FOR GRANTED)

Ron Paul

How do you announce a life giving project that will be fun and rewarding in just a few paragraphs? You get to the point in a hurry!

Beginning Feb 26 to April 8, Lord of Grace, in conjunction with Lutheran World Relief, will sponsor a fund raising campaign aimed at drilling wells and providing irrigation systems in Africa. These wells provide safe, clean, drinking water which improves economic prosperity, health, and promotes independence and proper sanitation practices. The cost for each system is \$2500 for an entire community. Our goal is to collect \$6,000.

This is a youth oriented project involving preschool, Sunday day care, and our teenagers. We seek your spare change and a few dollars bills each week as you leave the church. No major solicitation will be sought. The good news is that a person in Tucson, who has seen the effects of this project, has already deposited \$3000 in our account (half the cost) and wants us to match it. What an opportunity to get involved! Several individuals within the congregation have agreed to match up to \$250 each. Donate as a group from LOG or donate individually, it is up to you. This will be a good challenge as well as fun and not break your bank.

PROPERTY

On December 30th I took the pop top tabs that we have been collecting as a congregation to the Ronald McDonald House. They weighed them and we had collected four pounds. The money they receive from the recycled pop tabs will be added to the general operations fund to help them pay the utility bills and buy the necessary supplies for the house. The letter they gave me that day I have posted on the bulletin board for all of you to read. I encourage everyone to save the pop top tabs from any cans and put them in the can marked Ronald McDonald House tabs on the table in the hallway across from the bulletin board.

Thank you to everyone who has been dropping off their extra coupons for the troops overseas. If you didn't know about this before I encourage everyone who clips coupons to share the ones that you do not need. We are sending them to our troops overseas to be used in the commissary. It would be a very big help if you are able to cut them apart and put them in an envelope in the small box marked coupons on the table in the hallway across from the bulletin board. If you are unable to cut them please drop them off and I have several volunteers now who will help me cut them before



SCOUT SUNDAY

Sunday, February 5 is Scout Sunday... A day to recognize all current and former Cub and Boy Scouts and Scout Leaders in our church. It is also a day for remembering to live out part of the Cub Scout Promise "... to do my duty to God and my country...". Please join the Cub Scouts from Pack 219 right before 2nd service, while they perform a flag ceremony. During the service, Jeff Matlock, Cub Master, will be sharing more information about the Pack that Lord of Grace charters. Anyone and everyone who was a Scout and/or Scout Leader will be recognized during the service. Then, following 2nd service, there will be a chance to get to know some of the Scouts and Leaders in the Fellowship Hall. Coffee and goodies will be provided. Come support our Scouts!

Habitat Project

Building with Habitat Carol Buuck

Calling all hands to help raise the walls on the fourth Thrivent Builds with Habitat home on Saturday, March 3, 2012 at Corazon Del Pueblo location (I-10 and Craycroft). The time is not yet determined but you can count on an early start. No need to worry if you don't like to hammer nails or cut wood there are plenty of jobs to do that do not require tools! This is a time for work, fun, fellowship and sharing our skills, talents and blessings with others. For more information contact Carol Buuck cbuuck@comcast.net or Jo Riester at tsnazlib@hotmail.com.





Lord of Grace
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"Making Christ Known"

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
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**BIBLE STUDY EVERY SATURDAY AT
THE IHOP RESTAURANT 7AM**

ALL WELCOME