



Harbinger

www.graceevanston.org • churchoffice@graceevanston.org

December 2013

**Affirming,
Courageous,
Caring**

**Grace Lutheran
Church of Evanston
1430 South Blvd.
at Wesley
847.475.2211**

**Grace Is An Open
And Affirming RIC
Congregation**

OUR MISSION:

To courageously live out our faith by sharing grace with each other and the communities we serve.

OUR VISION:

All God's people will feel accepted, challenged, and cared for by Grace Church.

Rev. Daniel Ruen
Pastor

pd@graceevanston.org

•
Mark Bowman
Music Director

•
The Rev. Kaari Reiersen, The Rev. Jen Rude, and The Rev. Raquel Rodriguez,
Colleagues in Ministry

•
Marie O'Brien
Parish Administrator

•
Steve Brunger
Sexton

Notes For Advent

by Pastor Daniel



For Grace to plan and implement the recent Sabbatical experience took an incredible amount of organization, intention and energy. We ramped up for that time like few congregations do. We developed and supported leaders, made certain that all the tasks of the church, pastoral care needs and worship components were covered. The Lilly Grant ensured that Clare, I and the kids would have a sustained time of refreshment and faith-development. It went off extremely well. But we developed no intentional plan for how to emotionally greet one another again; no plan to acknowledge that not everyone would know how to act or feel once I and my family returned; and knowing that all of us would return to one another as changed people. I've sensed something different since I came back, and have spoken to several people about their feelings and impressions. The Lilly materials were careful to point out that likely we would have mixed emotions and a general feeling of the air being sucked out of the room after an experience such as this. In conversations with my clinical supervisor, Gregg, he said that what we're experiencing as a congregation is natural, important and very common. We are processing together, but at this point it may be that our feelings are still too diffuse to name or specify, and those feelings can be all over the map.

Our seasonal Advent Team decided to listen to and respect this reality in our congregation, to walk

alongside the power of the season as a close and creative companion. How do we take these everyday selves of ours—selves that have been through something extraordinary and challenging--and allow them to be transformed and sent back out into the world? How might we allow Advent to remind us that we are in a place of listening after

the Sabbatical experience, in a place of being empathic toward one another and in a place of healthy but sometimes uncomfortable questions?

To en flesh this idea, we plan to arrive each Sunday during Advent to a bare altar. We will process common items to adorn the chancel area: cloths, household candles, a kitchen plate, a pitcher from the cupboard, and then prepare our hearts and minds for worship as those who come looking for transformation. Our Advent candle will be ordinary, as well, assembled from everyday items and constructed during the procession. But in the midst of this common yearning, we will simultaneously praise God with celebration and joy. We will use an African-American Gospel procession, host dramatic readings of the Gospel, and learn an original call and response Eucharistic setting. At the end of the service, we will strip the altar of our

Continued on next page



Celebrate Grace's 75th Anniversary

Open House Reception
December 7 from 3-6pm

Anniversary Sunday
Worship Service December 8
at 10:45am

*Special Reception following
the Service*



Advent and Christmas at Grace



Midweek Services Wednesdays Dec. 4, 11, & 18 7:30pm

Christmas Eve Tuesday, December 24 7:00pm Special Music,
7:30 Worship

Christmas Day Wednesday, Dec. 25 10:00am Eucharist



common items that have been so blessed and prayed over, bringing them back into our lives with the hope of new life. We will observe Pilgrim Communion during the season, as well. Our midweek services will focus on listening and meditative prayer, featuring some short, contemplative video presentations and discussion in the Fellowship Hall. All are welcome to join us for these brief services each Wednesday night at 7:30pm during Advent.

We are waiting once again. We are waiting for the next inspiration of the Spirit to move through us. Just think for a moment about all we've done in the nearly seven years that I've been here: everything from sabbatical planning and implementation to major capital improvements to something as crazily hopeful and successful as the 75th Anniversary Courage Fund. We could add much more to the list. Perhaps Advent for us this year is, more than usual, an opportunity for us to take stock, to present ourselves and our ministries as sacrifices to God's love, asking the Lord for peace, faith and direction. I am not worried. To paraphrase St. Paul: The Lord has begun a good work in us, and I am confident God will complete it. I yearn to find our new way together as beloved family, and will happily greet you at the Welcome Table as a loving and empowering signpost.

Pastor Daniel



One of the earliest known depictions of the Magi from a 3rd-century sarcophagus. Vatican Museums, Rome, Italy.

75th Anniversary



One of Jesus' most evocative sayings has always been, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes." (Matthew 21:42) This issue of the Harbinger features a cover article about some of our cornerstones of faith over the years, and like so many things about the counter-cultural kingdom of God, they are surprising and inspiring.

The Cornerstones placed and maintained over 75 years of ministry are who we are as people of faith. They define our past, speak to our present and shape our future. I pray they reflect the heart of the Gospel in ways that bring people to a transformed life and contribute to the transformation of our world.

We plan to print each Cornerstone topic in detail in a special Anniversary Supplement that will be available online and on the day of our Anniversary Open House (Saturday, December 7th from 3-6pm) and Anniversary Sunday Worship Service (Sunday, December 8th at 10:45am). Enjoy!

Pastor Daniel

Cornerstones Talks Mark Milestones in Grace's History

During October, November and December, Grace members have shared important events at Grace and in the larger church that have helped us become a more welcoming congregation. On October 27, Anne Laurence shared information from the Grace archives about worshipping at Nichols School and breaking ground at South Boulevard and Wesley. On November 3, Pastor Kaari Reiersen talked about the denomination's movement to ordain women, and how that paved the way for her to be the first woman ordained at Grace. On November 10, Dave Utech told about Grace's decision to leave the Missouri Synod; on November 17 he talked about the congregation's decision to remodel the sanctuary to make it more inviting. On November 24, Carolyn Utech told about how installing the lift made our building accessible. And on December 1, Sue Graef recalled our decision and process in becoming a Reconciling in Christ congregation, and the ELCA's vote to ordain LGBTQ clergy.

All of these cornerstones are being compiled in a single document that will be available electronically and in paper format on the week-end of Grace's 75th anniversary celebration, December 7 and 8.

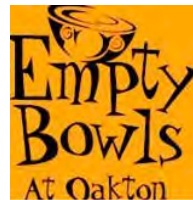
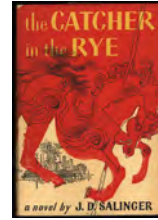
GRACE NEWS & EVENTS

December Birthdays

Book Group

Our next book group will meet on January 26th at Marilyn Grinager Mason's home (1508 Hinman Ave, Evanston 60201, 847-491-0986). We will discuss *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger.

Then in March, we will discuss *Little Bee* by Chris Cleave.



Empty Bowls at Oakton Community College

Choose from many handcrafted bowls generously donated by professional potters, local schools, and others in the community. Then join in a simple meal of soup and bread, as a reminder of those in need worldwide. The bowl is yours to keep!

Saturday Dec. 7, 10:30 a.m.-2 pm at the college's Des Plaines campus

\$14 for each bowl, with money going to local agencies serving the hungry.

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 12/1 | Pat Brunger
Dominique Baptiste |
| 12/7 | Phyllis Buck |
| 12/8 | Kelly Brunger
Nancy Stewart |
| 12/10 | Christine Collins
Mark Mathyer
David Utech |
| 12/12 | Mark Bowman |
| 12/14 | Cecilia Galicia |
| 12/15 | Sarah Carson
Peter Graef
Peter Spies |
| 12/16 | Joseph Flint |
| 12/17 | Craig A. Gonder
Nancy Starkman |
| 12/18 | Andria Morse |
| 12/20 | Gail Lamont |
| 12/21 | Kim Brown |
| 12/25 | Rev. Daniel Ruen
Lilia Johnson |
| 12/26 | Lynn Otte
Tyler Brunger |
| 12/31 | Rina Campbell |



Skills Sought:

Do you have a background or familiarity with buildings, architecture, construction?? If so, the Mission of Hospitality (MOH) committee would like to talk to you! No, you don't have to become a member unless you want to, but Grace could benefit from your skills.

Tell me more... The Mission of Hospitality committee is tasked with making sure that our facilities are able to support the current and future ministries and outreach of Grace. Having completed the Fellowship Hall / Kitchen renovation, MOH has now been asked by the Council to develop a Long Range Facility Plan to help Grace plan for the future. We are finding ourselves in need of advice about building systems.



How can you help? Contact Kim Brown browncanzeus@att.net or Lynn Otte LGOtte@comcast.net to find out more or tell us how you might be able or willing to help!

Thank you!



DECEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

December 1

Preaching Pastor Daniel
Assisting Minister Rachel Stark Inch
Music Director Mark Bowman
Lector Ann Stevens
Cantor Reggie Bruce
Acolyte Ava Daye
Ushers Sydell Reeves & Ann Stevens
Coffee Hour Holly & Jim O'Connor
Alter Care Ann Stevens & Nancy Mathyer
Godly Play Clare Tallon Ruen, Dorothy Nagelbach
Nursery Care Nina Alvarez
Flowers None During Advent

December 8 - 75th Anniversary Sunday

Preaching Pastor Daniel
Assisting Minister Kim Brown
Music Director Mark Bowman
Lector Sarah Carson
Cantor Caitlin Sellnow
Acolyte Cecilia Galicia
Ushers Larry Yarbrough & Jon Flaherty
Coffee Hour Nancy Schubert, Dorothy Nagelbach
Alter Care Ann Stevens & Nancy Mathyer
Godly Play Clare Tallon Ruen, Nina Alvarez
Nursery Care Nancy Schubert
Flowers None During Advent

December 15

Preaching Pastor Daniel
Assisting Minister Rosario Thacker
Music Director Mark Bowman
Lector Brian Vinson
Cantor Bonnie Gunzenhauser
Acolyte William Thacker
Ushers Larry Yarbrough & Jon Flaherty
Coffee Hour Bob & Gail Lamont
Alter Care Caitlin Sellnow, Christian Lantry
Godly Play Clare Tallon Ruen, Stephanie Kulke
Nursery Care Deb Mitchell
Flowers None During Advent

December 22

Preaching Pastor Daniel
Assisting Minister Ron Graef
Music Director Mark Bowman
Lector Dan Nehring
Cantor Jan Blackburn
Acolyte Julia Shoaf

Ushers Sarah Carson, Nate Brown
Coffee Hour Nancy Stewart & Nancy Starkman
Alter Care Caitlin Sellnow, Christian Lantry
Godly Play Clare Tallon Ruen, Stephanie Kulke
Nursery Care Deb Mitchell
Flowers None During Advent

December 24 Christmas Eve

Preaching Pastor Daniel
Assisting Minister Connie Wood
Music Director Mark Bowman
Lector Craig Gonder
Cantor TBD
Acolyte Zora Ruen
Ushers Sarah Carson, Nate Brown
Alter Care Deb Mitchell, Janet Wright
Nursery Care Nina Alvarez
Flowers Poinsettias

December 25 Christmas Day

Preaching Pastor Daniel
Assisting Minister Paul Bailey
Music Director Mark Bowman
Lector Zora Ruen
Cantor TBD
Acolyte Logan Spies
Ushers Jan Blackburn, Bob Shoaf & Cecilia Galicia
Coffee Hour Jan & Bill Blackburn
Alter Care Deb Mitchell, Janet Wright
Nursery Care Nancy Schubert
Flowers Poinsettias

December 29

Preaching Pastor Daniel
Assisting Minister Taína Rodriguez Encarnación
Music Director Mark Bowman
Lector Peg Haar
Cantor Dominique Baptiste
Acolyte Joanie Daye
Ushers Jan Blackburn, Bob Shoaf & Cecilia Galicia
Coffee Hour Ann Stevens, Lonny Miner
Alter Care Susan Graef & Nancy Schubert
Godly Play Nancy Stewart
Nursery Care Ann Stevens
Flowers Poinsettias



Grace Ofrenda



Kids in Godly Play the Sunday they made Sugar Skulls.

Threads of Grace -

Wear Your Gloves, Scarves and Hats - It's Winter!

But what if you don't own any? Threads of Grace and its colleagues know that's the case for many people as cold weather sets in.

Back in July, "Threads" resumed knitting and stitching for one of its favorite programs, working up a holiday supply of hats and scarves for the Evanston School Children's Clothing Association, Interfaith Action Hospitality Center, and the Chicago Uptown Ministry.



Gloves, however, are a little more difficult, especially waterproof and Thinsulate-lined ones. In their travels, Threads members Ginny Ayers and Nancy Starkman found exactly the gloves we wanted at rural Illinois and Wisconsin Blain's Farm & Fleet stores, and bought a few pairs at a time.

When the Christmas Glove Tree went up at Grace, there were surprising numbers of "glove adoptions" (pledges to sponsor and pay for pairs of gloves). O Joy!

Then came the second surprise in the tale. Threads received an unexpected boost from Blain's Farm & Fleet. A Threads of Grace member contacted Blain's Farm & Fleet about our plan and requested a reduction in the price for quantity.



Blain's Farm & Fleet has fully caught on to Grace's proposal, and the company representative and the buyer, who want all of the credit to go to the company, have reduced the price of each pair.

Blain's Farm & Fleet supports this project to warm homeless people, 20-25% of whom are Veterans. The glove project is mindful espe-

cially of them. We celebrate and sincerely thank you, All who have responded with a glove "adoption"! Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

For children that ESCCA serves, the "Fun Scarves and Hats" were arrayed at Grace's altar on November 17 for a sending-blessing, that the kids who receive the knitwear will be safe and warm. The "Fun" is in the bright colors and patterns, which ESCCA reports delight the schoolchildren.



Thirty-three scarves and fourteen hats were contributed by Marjorie and Dominique Baptiste, Steve Mosco, Nancy Starkman, Ginny Ayers, Gail Lamont, Helen Yarbrough, Jan Blackburn, Nell Ferguson, Rose-Maria Stiefvater of Plankinton, South Dakota, and Paula Wendland of Sturgeon Bay WI. Paula is a former member of Grace and an original founder of "Threads".

Scarves and hats for Chicago Uptown Ministry and Interfaith Action are mostly grey, navy, black or brown, to suit the many men that CUM and IA serve. Scarves cut from yards of fleece are as well-received as hand-knit ones. Abundant gifts of 72 hand-made scarves & fleece scarves, 74 hats, and over 75 pairs of gloves were displayed and blessed on Sunday, November 24, to the health and wellness of their wearers. On December 4th, all your gifts, given for the equal benefit of the two agencies, will be delivered to them in time for their gift-giving distributions.

Thank you, Grace members, for your donations and gifts to care for people who need these accessories to weather the winter.

Threads appreciates every loop of yarn, inch of fabric, and dollar that you have provided for neighbors in need.



Welcome to the Rev. Jen Rude, Program Director for ELM

We are expanding our support of LGBTQ pastors, seminarians, candidates and their ministries, thanks to our committed supporters. Each of these vital programs will now be led by the Rev. Jen Rude, who began October 1 as Program Director for ELM. Jen will work with the 139 members of Proclaim, with the 71 people we are accompanying through candidacy, and with an ever-expanding group of allied congregations and ministries through Ministry Engagement. We do this work to proclaim God's love and to seek justice for all. We are able to do it thanks to YOU.



ELCA pastor honored with award for work with homeless

Posted on November 15, 2013 by elcaupdates

The Rev. Violet Little, pastor of The Welcome Church in Philadelphia, is one of seven winners of the 2013 Purpose Prize, which honors people over the age of 60 who use their experience to make a difference against social problems. Little founded The Welcome Church, a new ELCA ministry that serves people who are experiencing homelessness.

"Some have said I am a voice for the voiceless, but that's not true," said Little. "People experiencing homelessness have voice; the key is how we can be better listeners."

At a Dec. 5 ceremony in Sausalito, Calif., Little will receive a \$25,000 award from *Encore.org*, a nonprofit organization that supports people who use their life experiences to work for a society's greater good.

Little began working with people experiencing homelessness after she got to know women who were sleeping and washing in the restrooms at Philadelphia's 30th Street Station, which she visited on her daily commute. She initially organized a drop-in center at Lutheran Church of the Holy Communion in Philadelphia's center city, known as the Welcome Center.

"People who live on the streets are always being roused and asked to move on," said Little.

The Welcome Center offers community members a safe place to spend a couple of hours having tea, napping and more. Little began providing pastoral care there, including hospital visits and even presiding at a wedding. As the center grew, Little organized support from the ELCA Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, Lutheran Church of the Holy Communion and other center city churches to form The Welcome Church, where she serves as part-time pastor along with Presbyterian and Episcopal clergy. The ELCA has a full communion relationship with the Presbyterian Church (USA) and with The Episcopal Church.

The Welcome Church is mobile — worship services will spontaneously take place in public places, including rail stations or under

bridges. Many downtown churches offer Bible studies and refreshment and will provide medical care when needed.

"These are people who know they're hungry for more than a peanut-butter and jelly sandwich," Little said.

The Welcome Church offers help finding housing, with local churches contributing welcome home kits to help members settle into apartments. A new social enterprise called Welcome Threads is producing original T-shirts and hand-woven products and offering members job skills and the chance to earn a little money.

On Tuesdays, The Welcome Church gathers at Lutheran Church of the Holy Communion for what members call their Tuesday banquet. "Everything we do centers on the table as a symbol of home," Little said. "Tea is out, and members bring what they can — some mint, some rescued bread, or cookies, and of course, the sacramental bread and wine."

Little wants the Purpose Prize to amplify the voice of The Welcome Church community. Much of the award will be dedicated to an "I Have a Dream" fund, through which The Welcome Church will give grants to other congregations "to stimulate people's imagination of how to live out (the Rev.) Martin Luther King's vision of justice in their setting," Little said.

"People think of this as a community of scarcity," Little said. "But it's really a community of great abundance, because God is at the center."

The ELCA continues to make the start of new ministries a priority. Since the beginning of the ELCA 25 years ago, more than 470 new ministries have organized as congregations across this country. Today more than 50 percent of ELCA new congregations are emerging from diverse socio-economic groups, ethnic and multicultural communities and growing young populations.

From ELCA News Blog



Setting the Table

Grace Lutheran will join with as many as five other ELCA churches in Evanston and Skokie in a process called Setting the Table. Part of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois' Hands @ Work program for congregations, Setting the Table enables a faith community or a group of faith communities to identify unmet social needs in their communities. Once identified, the process leads the congregation(s) in how best to meet the unmet need and what resources, human and otherwise, must be in place to do so. It is a wonderful opportunity for Grace members to work with members from our nearby ELCA neighbors on a Gospel-driven project.

The other ELCA churches involved are Evanston churches: Immanuel, St. Paul, University, and Trinity; and St. Timothy in Skokie (yet to confirm participation). Meetings will take place monthly beginning Thursday, January 9th. After January, the meetings will be held on the first Thursday of every month. Pastor Daniel, Joe Flint, and Lisa Kosnik will be the primary participants from Grace. Any and all are welcome to join them at these meetings. If interested, please contact Joe at jflintlpc@yahoo.com.

December 1 is World AIDS Day.

More than 30 million people live with HIV. Whether it is caring for orphans in Malawi or educating people throughout the United States- ELCA World Hunger is committed to accompanying and serving people living with HIV and AIDS. Grace will be joining the global community by observing World AIDS Day during the service on December 1. About 17 years ago Grace's Community of Care Committee began assisting a woman and her son who have HIV or AIDS, providing social support and taking her to doctor's appointments. Her son was 8 years old when we started; he is now 25 years old and a successful insurance salesman; by now he is able to get to doctor's appointments on his own.

Anyone interested in becoming part of this committee can speak with one of its members about it: Ginny Ayers, Nell Ferguson, Marilyn Mason, Sy Reeves, Anne Shafer, Nancy Starkman, Carolyn Utech or Helen Yarbrough.



Thirsty Flood

On November 3rd, 12 youth and 4 adults danced on Fountain Square as part of an Evanston 150 celebration. This event was put together by Evanston Dance Ensemble and was called, "Putting Dance on the Map." It was an attempt to bring dance outside and make it fun and accessible.

Evanston Dance Ensemble approached me (Clare Tallon Ruen) last year to invite my group LakeDance to perform in this event. They had heard about the outdoor dancing we do. And of course I said YES, choosing a date in the fall that I thought could accommodate back to school schedules.

This piece, "Thirsty Flood" was inspired by the site we chose, Fountain Square. Fountain Square is, in my opinion, a vast sea of brick and cement, bounded by asphalt and cars: impermeable (not letting water through.) The theme I chose to match the site is urban flooding, an issue of growing concern in the Chicago Metro region.

As part of my research, I reached out to people to find out if anyone had taken steps to make their properties less impermeable--more receptive to water infiltration rather than flooding or sewer overwhelming. It was an inspiration to see all the rain gardens that are in our area!

The dance focussed on one moment in a larger story and was performed by many Grace kids! Rain came down and flooded the square (Ava, Joanie, Zora, Logan and one other.) The flood caused



a crack in the pavement. (Cement was portrayed by Isaac and other boys) Finally, tree roots, inspired by the opening, were able to grow and draw the water down--ending the flood. (Sadie and others were roots)

The scenario of roots mitigating flooding is very real. As part of the performance event, I brought

500 (!) newsletters from the Arbor Day Foundation titled, "How Trees can Retain Stormwater Runoff" and invited several environmental leaders to come and share these and other materials.

We had a blast and I believe the overall event was a success. To view the dance on You Tube, visit http://youtu.be/IPBdQM_2VNU

Pastor Dan does his Sermon.
By: Zora Ruen



When my daughter Zora was about 8 years old, she once asked why I had to work so hard on sermons every week. She saw me putting in a lot of energy and time to produce them. I told her that as a Pastor I was charged with preaching the Gospel to the congregation in interesting, challenging and diverse ways each Sunday. My sermon therefore needed to be a certain length, inspired, and carefully constructed. She then asked me,

"What's the Gospel?" Considering her age and my assumptions of her theological understanding I said, "Umm....well...I guess I'd say the Gospel is proclaiming to everyone that God forgives you." Zora, exasperated, responded by exclaiming, "Well, then why don't you just say THAT every Sunday and be done with it! It's less work for you and shorter for us!" I responded, "You're absolutely right. But if I did that every Sunday I would also

get fired." Since then Zora and I joke about this almost every week when she sees me working away. She came up with a cartoon vision of how, in her mind, Grace would benefit from my communicating the heart of the Gospel more clearly and succinctly. Maybe someday she can get to seminary, become ordained, and get fired from her first parish by preaching the way she feels it's meant to be done. Enjoy, PD

Bethel Launches New Session of Brain Train program

Bethel New Life's **Brain Train** program recently launched in DePriest Elementary School on Chicago's West Side. Based on decades of research, the program helps students learn faster, improve their reading comprehension, and read on grade level or above. At DePriest, Bethel is working with 16 students in the 2nd and 3rd grades and is aiming to have a similar impact to last year's program at Spencer Elementary. During this session of Brain Train, 100 percent of students gained at least one grade level in reading; and 40 percent gained three or more grade levels after only ten weeks. The program has proven to be a highly-effective, systematic approach to improving the educational foundation for all learners to excel in school.

Brain Train Overview

Bethel New Life's Brain Train helps students who are behind in reading catch up with their peers. Discovering that you can read and enjoying school for the first time are priceless experiences.

Bethel New Life's Brain Train uses precision-teaching methods to help students in grades K-3 improve their reading fluency and comprehension. Based on decades of research, the program helps students learn faster, improve their reading comprehension, and read on grade level or above. The Brain Train:

- Identifies students who do not qualify for special education services.
- Assigns specific skills to master that build upon previously mastered skills.
- Evaluates students daily to assess progress.
- Encourages students with constant feedback loops.
- Maintains program sustainability by equipping parents, teachers, and school administrators.



Results

The Brain Train has demonstrated success in a variety of school settings and formats within the Chicago Public School system. This year, the Brain Train came to Spencer Elementary and has helped 34 students learn to read. After only ten weeks, 100 percent of students gained at least one grade level in reading; and 40 percent gained three or more grade levels.

The program has proven to be a highly-effective, systematic approach to improving the educational foundation for all learners to excel in school.

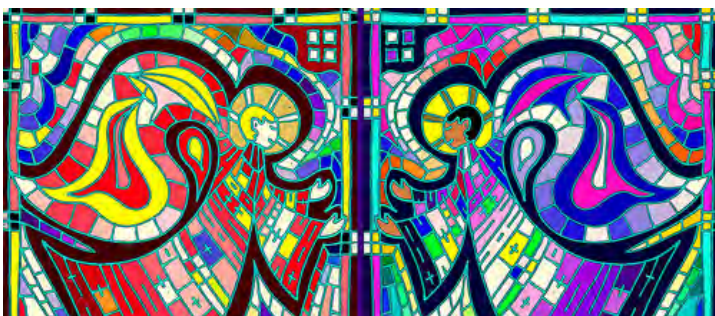
Bring the Brain Train to Your School

Brain Train is an extremely cost effective educational enhancement service for helping students build and retain skills. Bethel partners with schools and tailors the format to meet the needs of the school.

Bethel also hires parent assistants from the school community to work with the students, creating jobs for engaged parents.

The Brain Train is offered at three different levels of intervention:

- The typical individualized pull-out model (most intensive) serves 20 students at a time throughout the semester. Students work in pairs with a trained parent assistant for 20-minute sessions, four days per week.
- The classroom push-in model (moderate intensity) serves 20 to 30 students in the classroom. Groups of 3-5 students work with a trained parent assistant for 15-minute sessions, three days per week.
- The summer session is designed to help students build and retain their skills, especially 2nd graders going into 3rd grade.



Bethel Hosts Early Childhood Symposium

On October 12, Bethel hosted the Austin Early Childhood Symposium in Amberg Hall. Attended by more than 128 early childhood professionals, the symposium focused on how to bring people together to support the social and emotional needs of children in Austin. This first time event was sponsored by Austin Coming Together (ACT), a community-based non-profit. Bethel's parent educator, Gloria Canada, was honored at the event for her many years of service supporting youth and families.

With more than 30 participants and 10 companies in attendance, this event was a tremendous success in supporting the program's commitment to increasing the pool of qualified minority candidates for electrical utility construction jobs in Illinois. Early child forum stresses the social-emotional. The full article is below.

Austin Coming Together focuses on training and skills building

By Loretta A. Ragsdell, Contributing Reporter / Columnist

More than 128 early childhood caregivers, professionals, and educators came together on Oct. 12 at Bethel New Life's Amberg Hall, 1140 N. Lamon, for the first Austin Early Childhood Symposium.

The symposium was an initiative of Austin Coming Together (ACT), a community-based non-profit collaborative. The free half-day event featured breakfast, a panel discussion, four workshops, lunch, and an awards ceremony.

The symposium's theme was "Social and Emotional Development," with a focus on how people can come together to support the social and emotional needs of children in Austin.

Several vendors, including the American Heart Association, SEIU Healthcare Organization, and the Chicago's Children's Museum, were on hand disseminating health information and information on the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare).

"The symposium's goal was to bring people together, anyone who is an advocate for, or works with, young children, birth to age 8 and their families," said Andrew Born, ACT's director of community planning. "We wanted to bring them together to provide training and some skills building opportunities, giving them information on how to be a better advocate for young children and their families, and coming together to raise awareness on the importance of early childhood and development," he added.

ACT was organized to help Austin community partners develop shared leadership in four areas: early childhood development, youth development, workforce development, and the built environment, which includes planning, housing and economic development.

State representatives La Shawn Ford and Camille Lilly partnered with ACT to present the symposium. Lilly said, "Early childhood training and development is the most important time in a child's life, and ultimately that child is going to be a part of our life and our work force, so this kind of training is important."

Ford added, "It's clearly the mission we should be undertaking. Everyone talks about empowering parents, and this is what this is all about, empowering parents to meet the needs of our young people,"

The representatives were also there to present awards to five early childhood professionals and advocates nominated by their peers and coworkers: Gloria Canada, Margaret Johnson, Blanco Trujillo, Barbara McPherson-Adams, and Gloria Harris.

Harris, a grandmother of 21, many of whom now attend Austin schools, said all 11 of her children went to early learning programs.

"I am passionate about early childhood education because I feel every child deserves a good education," Harris said. "Without an education, there is no success," she added.

In accepting her diamond clear award, McPherson-Adams said, "The other day I was thinking about whether or not I have been living my life, but now I have this, and I know that I have."

All four workshops were well attended by enthusiastic and engaged participants. Presenter of the "Maximizing Academic Growth with Social and Emotional Learning Workshop, Dr. Durriyyah Kemp said, "It's been remarkable. I am very, very happy, especially with this being the first one. I think the turnout is great. I think the enthusiasm is great. The level of engagement and participation in my workshop was absolutely wonderful."

Annie Robinson, an eager participant, said it was an invaluable experience. "This event connected me with resources for [understanding] social emotional skills of children on every level. It also connected me with former classmates and co-workers in the educational field. I'm able to take it back to my community to make sure I do my part to educate our children."

The Monday before the symposium, registration closed, with 118 pre-registered and others wait-listed. Of the pre-registrants, 89 showed and others from the wait-list, plus walk-ins were able to attend.

Those who attended were glad to be there.

Sidney Arnold, a home-daycare owner, with his wife Faith, said he learned how to focus on the business and educational side of child development. "I learned the importance of using the social-emotional development skills of the child which will make me a better child-care provider," he added.

ACT, now three years old, represents about 30 nonprofit organizations and is funded by multiple sources, including corporate grants and the annual dues of its membership agencies.

Whole School Network Helps Students With School Attendance Challenges

School attendance and tardiness is a major challenge for students on the West Side that can have an equally significant impact on their classroom performance. To target this problem, Bethel New Life runs a program called the Whole School Network that partners with schools to identify students with chronic attendance problems. The program then works to support parents in finding ways to improve the student's attendance. Whole School Network is currently operating in DePriest and Spencer Elementary Schools.

December Calendar

Every Sunday 10:45 Worship followed by coffee hour

Sunday School During Worship

Celebrate Grace's 75th Anniversary

Open House Reception December 7 from 3-6pm

Anniversary Sunday

Worship Service December 8 at 10:45am *Special Reception after Service*

Advent and Christmas at Grace

Midweek Services Wednesdays Dec. 4, 11, & 18 7:30pm

Christmas Eve Tuesday, December 24 7:00pm Special Music,
7:30 Worship

Christmas Day Wednesday, Dec. 25 10:00am Eucharist



Find us at GraceEvanston.org



Grace Church Council

Les Inch, Chair,

Jon Flaherty, Martha Fry, Jarrod Gaither, Nathan Johnson,
Dorothy Nagelbach, Holly O'Connor, Laura Wally

Grace

Grace Lutheran Church of Evanston

1430 South Blvd.

Evanston, IL 60202

Voice: 847.475.2211

Fax: 847.869.9442