



Harbinger

www.graceevanston.org • churchoffice@graceevanston.org January 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

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Mark Bowman
Music Director

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**The Rev. Kaari
Reierson, The Rev. Jen
Rude, and The Rev.
Raquel Rodriguez,**
Colleagues in Ministry

•

Chloe Martinez
Office Manager

•

Steve Brunger
Sexton

R & D



It's hard to know the bias of one's own culture unless one is forced to step away from it. For the past six months I've been part of a Metro Chicago Synod initiative that not only revealed our mainline Lutheran church's cultural bias, it has empowered me (and, I pray it will empower all of you) to identify and transform it.

I'm talking about R&D. No, not 'Research and Development' (although, that is why I chose these letters); in my developing leadership universe, R&D stands for 'Relationships and Discipleship.'

R&D is as simple as it is challenging.

Simple because it points out what most of us already know: relationships are the reason we come to Grace. Relationships are the glue that binds our church together—our relationship with God, God's relationship with us, and our relationships within this community.

R&D is challenging because it requires a fundamental shift in how churches like ours lead, how we follow, and how we define our culture. It's not that we don't already have strong relationships, or that we don't disciple one another, it's a matter of how much we emphasize those things and proactively design a leadership philosophy around them.

Preachers can give great sermons, directors of music can provide diverse and energizing congregational singing, and volunteer coordinators can provide solid educational programming for our children, youth and adults. However, if our relationships are not intentional, genuine, grace-filled, honest, trustworthy and growing, then I believe none of the aforementioned aspects of ministry would work half as well.

The main problem, as I see it, is that our centuries-old, church-cultural bias of focusing on institutional structure and programming—without prioritizing relationships and discipleship—has caught up with us. We cannot continue to operate as a 1950's civic institution where mainstream society came to us in

droves, looking for programs to complete their assumed role of 'responsible citizen with 2.5 children and a car in the garage.'

I believe, along with our Bishop, Wayne Miller, that in this rapidly changing societal context we

need to ask deeper questions of one another.

An example: Instead of, "What area of ministry can we plug you into?" we could be asking, "Where and how do you derive meaning? Why are you yearning for community, or for something larger than your individual life goals and dreams? What or who is God in your experience, and what is your personal call to respond to this God?"

And, finally, if we get that far, the next really exciting question might be, "How can we coach and support you in realizing that personal and communal call?"

These queries, especially if asked within a context of a genuine desire for relationship and shared development, fly in the face of our established church culture. If emphasized and explored in greater detail I believe they will lead to a more exciting, empowering, adaptive and sustainable ministry philosophy at Grace.

Because of this new philosophy I've been leading differently within the last few months. I am no longer focused on the metrics of worship attendance, on the number and size of our programs, or on budget line items. I am now prayerfully focused on what I believe Jesus was focused on with his own followers: forming genuine, trustworthy relationships that develop disciples. And what did that ministry philosophy do? It empowered those disciples to likewise empower and develop even more disciples. Attendance, programs and budgets are important, of course, but in a biblically-based leadership philosophy they come in a distant second.

That biblical leadership philosophy is why I am writing this article to you today. I am not writing this because Jesus coordinated his Sunday School staff well,

Continued on next page

offered family-friendly programs, or balanced his church budget.

Therefore, a new metric for Grace to measure success would be something like this: How many layers of intentional R&D pairings and groups are we hosting and supporting? How many leaders are we coaching and developing to satisfy their own call, and how many people are they identifying to also empower, coach and support?

Now, you may think this whole thing sounds scarily like 'Amway for Jesus Freaks,' but if it is, then I say Amway simply stole it from Jesus in the first place. This isn't something canned and nakedly self-serving like 'bring three more people to the meeting.' This is, instead: Identify, invite and empower three more people to discover and develop their call from Jesus so that we might better love and serve the world.

I have already experienced powerful transformations in the leaders I am currently coaching and supporting. Ask me about it sometime. I can't wait to tell as many people as I can. Before my sabbatical time begins, we'll be sponsoring a retreat with the Council and our ministry leaders (using Lilly Grant funds) to not only develop a short term plan to address my being away for 16 weeks, we'll be exploring this R&D leadership philosophy for future use.

Six months ago I thought about my sabbatical as something to relieve the stress and emotional weariness I experience as your pastor. After being coached in this biblical model of looking at how we might lead, develop and empower one another as Jesus' disciples, and after witnessing early results of how this R&D emphasis is transforming our ministry, I now think about my sabbatical as a short detour in the next phase of ministry—a phase of powerfully transformative experiences that bring us closer to one another, and closer to God's promises of abundant life in this world.

I know it sounds crazy, but I already can't wait to come back.

The Peace and Joy of Christ,
PD

December Grace Budget Meeting

On December 9th a quorum of members met to discuss the 2012 and 2013 budgets. A variety of issues were discussed.

Regarding the 2012 buget, we continue to have intent to meet our contributions to our Partners in Ministry. Regarding the 2013 budget, we continue to tithe at 10% in terms of our giving to Partners in Ministry. We have also provided support for a new parish administrator and increases in salary for pastor and the sexton as well.

During our discussion of the 2013 budget several members offered suggestions for ways to further reduce expenses and increase financial support. Finally, treasurer John Wright indicated that the 2013 budget and the Lilly grant will be kept as separate budgets.

The budget was approved unanimously as it was written. Copies will be made available for anyone who wants one, and council members can respond to questions.



Sisters Need Discipline!

In a recent column written by Mary Schmich, Chicago Tribune (mschmich@tribune.com) she talks about a song written by Sister Kathy Sherman of St. Joseph's ministry center in LaGrange Park in response to the Vatican's publicly reprimanding the country's largest leadership organization of Catholic women religious. The Vatican accused the sisters of being radical feminists and dissenters, out of step with church doctrine and in need of discipline. As I recall the news item, they disapproved of the sisters focusing on the needs of the poor rather than other doctrinal issues that the Vatican considered more important. This song, *Love Cannot Be Silenced*, was placed on YouTube by a novice at her congregation, a civil rights attorney with an aptitude for social media, overlaid with photos of demonstrations in support of the sisters. It spread. Since Mary Schmich's column it has probably spread even more, and you can watch it by searching YouTube - "*Love Cannot Be Silenced*." Happy listening and watching.



Getting ready for the Christmas Pageant.

Looking past the wrinkles in my mirror

Standing in front of the bathroom mirror this morning, I started to shave. This is, not surprisingly, a daily task. Today's routine had me deeply engrossed in thought about Marilyn's request that I write this article about the Dec. 8 Radical Christian Life workshop. Should I write a recap on the various parts of our day? Should I list out the wrap-up ideas that emerged?



As I pondered these thoughts and tried not to knick my nose with the razor, I realized an opportunity presented itself to me every day in this daily task that makes me more presentable for my job or for folks I might meet on the street. In looking in that mirror, I had the opportunity to review what I might do today to better myself and better the lives of others around me. This, it occurred to me as I took a close look under my chin, was at the heart of the message of Sr. Joan Chittister, the workshop leader brought to us via electronic media from Trinity Wall Street in New York.

Twenty-four other Christians, including 10 of us from Grace and Pastor Dawn Mass, a former interim pastor at Grace, gathered in Fellowship Hall to hear Sr. Joan and participate in group exercises. The workshop was focused on contemplation. While much of what we examined was our own beliefs, we also applied what we

discussed to our concerns for justice and service to others in great need.

Sr. Joan challenged each of us to be prophets in the world, not wait for others to take up that role. She called on us to in effect "be God's hands". How interesting! Imagine all the times we pray for God's intervention where we might take action to bring about the correction needed while asking for God's support. You might be saying, as I often have, "but I'm only one person". In

response, I suspect Sr. Joan would tell us we are simply giving responsibility to others what we could do ourselves to help others or alter injustices we see daily.

My bathroom mirror just became much more than a piece of glass. It became a tool for me to use in "bringing about the change I want to see in the world". No avoiding it. I'd be a bloody mess if I didn't look in it tomorrow.

Submitted by Joe Flint, co-chair of Grace's social justice initiative



GRACE NEWS & EVENTS



OUTREACH Goal—Cooperative Winter Coat Drive

Our Christian neighbors to the east, the members of the Fresh Anointing Worship Center on Ridge and South Boulevard, are having a winter coat drive. They're asking for new, cleaned and gently used coats to donate to families in need.

Pastor Daniel recently met with Pastor Carolyn Jenkins from Fresh Anointing partly in the spirit of our Strategic Planning Outreach goal. Engaging in shared mission activity is a great way to begin a relationship of learning and trust.

If you would like to purchase a child-sized or adult winter coat and give it to Pastor Daniel, please do so and PD will arrange to bring them over to Fresh Anointing as a sign of our shared fellowship in Christ. Thank you!



January Birthdays

- 01/01 Sue Graef
- 01/04 Frank Disori
- 01/10 Jim O'Connor
- 01/16 Paul Talwane
- 01/19 Anne Laurence
Janet Wright
- 01/20 Paul Bailey
- 01/23 Zinzi Steele
- 01/25 Judith Ericksen
- 01/26 Jack Sokol
- 01/28 Nell Yarnall
- 01/29 Zora Tallon Ruen
- 01/30 Juanie Daye
- 01/31 Sydell Reeves
Jonah Wright

Narthex Calendar

If you have an event occurring at the church you may place that event on the calendar on the bulletin board in the hallway of the narthex. There is a pen compatible with white boards mounted at the white boards. We encourage anyone with an event to mark it on the calendar so that others may know about the event and if necessary schedule around the event. Be sure to identify time in addition to the actual day of your event. If you have more information you wish to publicize note it in the larger space at the right of the calendar.

JANUARY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Jan 6th

Preaching Pastor Daniel Ruen
Assisting Minister Connie Wood
Lector Brian Vinson
Acolyte David Thacker
Ushers Sydell Reeves and Ann Stevens
Coffee Hour Anne Laurence and Connie Wood
Altar Care Yarbrough and Sullivan
Nursery Nancy Schubert and Cecilia Galicia

Jan 13th

Preaching Pastor Daniel Ruen
Assisting Minister Ron Graef
Lector Mark Mathyer
Acolyte Faloside Tawio
Ushers Sydell Reeves and Ann Stevens
Coffee Hour Russ Kohnken and Christine Collins
Altar Care Yarbrough and Stewart
Nursery Nina Alvarez

Jan 20th

Preaching Pastor Daniel Ruen
Assisting Minister Carolyn Utech
Lector Marilyn Mason
Acolyte Joanie Daye
Ushers Larry Yarbrough and Jon Flaherty
Coffee Hour Laura Wally and Andria Morse
Altar Care Yarbrough and Stewart
Nursery Deb Mitchell

Jan 27th

Preaching Pastor Daniel Ruen
Assisting Minister Rachel Stark Inch
Lector Christine Collins
Acolyte Faloside Tawio
Ushers Larry Yarbrough and Jon Flaherty
Coffee Hour Rina Campbell and Peter Spies
Altar Care TBA
Nursery Dee Johnson



Worship Notes

We will have a new setting after Christmas. The Sundays in January will be primarily focused on the Epiphany of Our Lord—an extended meditation on and celebration of Jesus' arrival into our broken and weary world. Sunday, January 13th is The Baptism of Our Lord when we will do the annual Rite of Asperges (you know: where you get doused with water from behind during the procession as a reminder of yours and Jesus' baptism). Lent comes early this year as Easter falls on Sunday, March 31st. Therefore, get ready for Ash Wednesday on February 13th. The first Sunday of Lent happens on February 17th.

In other Worship News, your new Worship Committee has been formed and is working well with Director of Music Mark Bowman and me. The Committee is well-served by Sue Graef, Bonnie Gunzenhauser, Jim Clark and Rachel Stark-Inch. Mark Bowman has ordered Lutheran liturgical materials and we are devoting a significant portion of every meeting to discussing liturgy so Mark can learn more about us and our traditions. If you have any questions, suggestions or concerns, please let one of us know and we'll make sure to address them.

New Parish Administrator Coming Soon!

The Parish Administrator search committee, comprised of Susan McDaniels, Nancy Schubert, and Laura Wally, is starting to interview candidates for this open position during the last weeks of December and first week of January. Pastor Daniel will be closely involved in the interview process as well. The goal is to have the new parish administrator start around February 4th.



Scarves on Grace's Altar that were being donated to Uptown.

Reflecting on Grace's Midweek Advent Gatherings

Because Christmas fell on a Tuesday in 2012, there were only three opportunities for midweek worship, and we took advantage of that to try something different. On December 5, 12 and 19 a small group of Grace folks ate supper together, learned together and worshiped together, all at one table in Fellowship Hall.

We enjoyed delicious soups prepared by Bob Shoaf and Carolyn Utech, artisan breads baked by Larry Utech, and fresh fruit contributed by the Ruens and Brian Vinson.

We explored the benefits and challenges of eating local foods in season, and the dire consequences to people around the world because of our over-abundant shopping baskets. We heard from Martha Bayne, the founder of Soup and Bread, about how serving a simple meal in a local bar has become a vehicle for community-building and hunger relief fundraising. Matt Ryan from The Talking Farm talked to us about urban agriculture efforts in our area and how planting gardens has created job opportunities for local



youth.

Lighting of candles transformed our table into a place of worship. An opening song set the tone for ancient and modern readings from the Bible and other sources. Members of our group reflected on "What are you waiting for?" and a meditative art activity prepared the crèche for the Christ child over the three weeks. A prayer circle allowed us to share our hopes, needs and thanks with God and one another. A sending song reminded us that many around the world are waiting for something most of us take for granted – a home.

Thank you to everyone who was willing to give these gatherings a chance! And thank you to Lara Galicia and Dorothy Nagelbach for providing meaningful activities for the children while the adults were in conversation after supper.

Mark Bowman, Anne Laurence, Pastor Daniel and Megan Sawyer

Grace Christmas Pageant 2012!



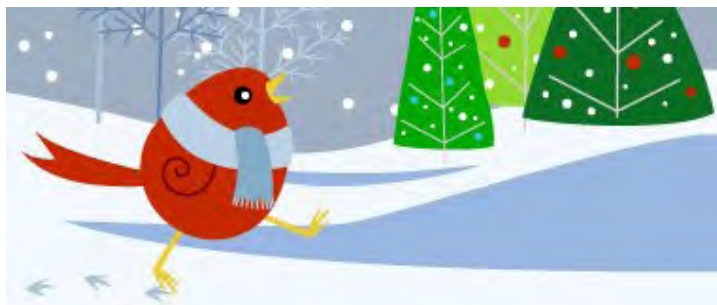
Grace Christmas Pageant 2012!



January Calendar

Every Sunday 10:45 Worship followed by coffee hour

Sunday School During Worship



Find us at GraceEvanston.org

Grace Church Council

Les Inch, Chair,

Jon Flaherty, Nathan Johnson, Danielle Keifert,
Dorothy Nagelbach, Holly O'Connor, Laura Wally

Grace

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