



Harbinger

www.graceevanston.org • churchoffice@graceevanston.org

January 2015

**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.

**10:45 Worship
Every Sunday**

**Rev. Daniel Ruen
Pastor**

pd@graceevanston.org

•
**Mark Bowman
Music Director**

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

•
**Marie O'Brien
Parish Administrator**

•
**Jackson DeLeon-Lopez
Sexton**

Dirty Wet Towel Stewardship

by Pastor Daniel

As I entered the rest room stall of the YMCA this last week I saw a dirty wet towel on the floor.

"Yuck," was my first thought. But all the other stalls were full.

I looked at that wet towel and thought, "Yuck" again. I also thought, "People should be more considerate." My next thought was that the Y staff should be checking the rest rooms more often. My next thought went to me actually doing something about the dirty wet towel. I could simply pick it up, and take it over to the dirty laundry pile.

But that also didn't feel right.

This was, after all, a dirty wet towel on a public bathroom floor. A public bathroom of the men's locker room, no less. We have strong evolutionary responses to things we experience as abhorrent or impure, and this one fit that bill to a tee. To further complicate matters, as I was considering whether to take it over to the dirty towel pile, I got this 'see-how-good-of-a-person-I-would-be-for-doing-this' sensation. It kind of revolted me. Maybe just leave the stupid towel on the floor, already.



Besides, this whole thing was getting way out of hand; by this point I had been staring down at that dirty wet towel for about 30 seconds—which is an eon in dirty-wet-towel-consideration years.

I laughed at myself and thought, "Maybe if I look at this dirty wet

towel long enough I can learn to love it." Aren't those interesting curves and folds in the bunched up, soaking fabric? Is that dark, creepy stain near the corner in the shape of Jesus? **Answer:** No, and no.

As I was about to leave the dirty wet towel on the floor, and exit the dirty wet towel restroom stall, I had a revelation: boom. The revelation came in the form of a person: Pastor Mark Dennis.

Pastor Mark was the Senior Pastor of Second Baptist in Evanston for several years, a colleague of mine, who recently became the Executive Director of the McGaw YMCA.

He was the one who had the moral voice to call both white and black clergy together whenever there was a shooting or a crisis in our city. He was the one who got his primarily African-American congregation to host the CROP Walk a few years ago, challenging his people mix it up with liberal white churches on the North Shore and risk deeper relationships. He was

Continued on next page

Adult Ed Kickoff Breakfast

Join us Jan. 11, at 9:30am, when we'll introduce the *Animate* curriculum. Full article inside.

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAYS FEBRUARY 1 AND 8

In all the years I have attended Grace; its Generous Spirit has been consistent and truly amazing. Over time as I became more involved I learned the answers to some understandable questions. Maybe you have also wondered how Grace pays for its ministries, staff and operating costs. Maybe you have thought and prayed on what level of financial support is

your responsibility and where does your contribution fit in and how important it is? On February 1st, the Council will host a Fellowship Chat to answer your questions and on February 8th hold a Stewardship Sunday providing the Grace family an opportunity to pledge their support for 2015. More details will follow, but mark your calendars.

Les Inch



Towel, continued

the one who brokered a civil rights tour with Rabbi Andrea London from Beth Emet so their Jewish and black Baptist youth groups could reach across the chasms of ethnicity, class, and culture to experience shared courage and peacemaking.

"Pastor Mark Dennis is now the director of this organization," I thought. As I was walking in that day, I saw all the work that's being done to the youth room section of the facility; I assume Mark wants to make sure that space is updated and more accessible to Evanston's youth, who depend on a safe place to spend time, play, find mentors, and grow into adults.

I picked up the towel (not by the mystery stain corner) and walked it over to the dirty laundry pile. Not only that, I cleaned up some toilet paper that was on the floor, and recycled a Redeye newspaper that was left hanging on the railing.

All the other feelings of disgust, moral confusion, self-flagellation and weariness left me. "I have a relationship with the leader of this place," I thought. "I believe in him, I trust him, and I am inspired by his courage." Giving, even the ridiculously small gift of cleaning up that dirty wet towel, was joyful. As I did it, I gave thanks for Pastor Mark, the staff of the YMCA, and the community of people who surround me.

We're going to do a couple of Stewardship Sundays on February 1st and February 8th. It's not our usual Sunday to do so, of course. The fall stewardship drive got lost in all the **2ignite Congregational Retreat** work. The council thinks we should give ourselves an opportunity to hear testimonies about generosity and also provide information to the congregation about 2014 and look ahead to 2015. On the 8th of February those who wish to do so may make a monetary pledge.

Les, our Council President, and Russ, our treasurer, will give you all the facts and reasons why we would like to increase giving, and why it's necessary for the ministry to stay apace of heating bills, property improvements, staffing and benevolence. But I believe your heart for giving and serving comes primarily from a relational connection.



Grace's Christmas gifts for Y.O.U. children.

As when I thought of Pastor Mark while contemplating that dirty wet towel, I wonder where your relationship enters in.

Is it a relationship with God that compels you to give with joy and freedom? Is it your relationship with me, or other leaders? Is it your relationship to worship, or your close friends here, or your relationship to those you know who need a helping hand? Is it your relationship to LGBTQ persons whom you know the church has for too long ignored and oppressed, so that you feel called to support a community that seeks to be more welcoming?

Whatever it is, I submit that it's a relationship, at heart, that calls you to give. Guilt, anxiety, how you were raised, what you think you should do or not do—all those things are obviously in play when it comes to talking about money and the church.

But as with all relationships, you have an opportunity to grow this one. Not necessarily with money, but with prayer, involvement, and thankfulness. This is God's ministry, and God has made it clear through Jesus that a relationship is what God desires. Our gifts of money, service and time allow this organization to affirm, care and give courage to so many, even if it happens through the broken group of forgiven sinners that we are. All that limits us is our relational awareness—our belief in how much we are limited, or not. When it comes to God's relational power and promise of love, however, I believe the sky's the limit.

The world can be so dark and so odious that it seems there will be no end to the dirty wet towels. There likewise seems to be no end to those who keep asking you to pick them up. It's a reality that they will always be there.

But even the experience of those dirty wet towels can be made new. Even they can be a trigger for thankfulness, service, and joy. If not, then why would we dare to enter the house of God and subject ourselves to the Gospel of Jesus Christ on a regular basis?

If you have a testimony about certain relationships and how they've inspired you at Grace, consider sharing it with me, Les or Russ. We want to get to the heart of our stewardship. We want to get to the heart of our service and generosity in this place.

If relational thankfulness, relational power, and relational inspiration are what stewardship is about, then I look forward to developing stewardship, growing stewardship, and giving thanks for the discipleship opportunities it provides.

The Peace and Joy of Christ,

Pastor Daniel

2IGNITE

2ignite Service Meeting on January 10

The workgroup focused on Service coming out of the 2 Ignite retreat (named 2 Ignite Service at the retreat) will be meeting on Saturday, Jan. 10, at 10 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Our focus will be on additional usage of our building space and the parking lot at Grace. Anyone interested in discussing ideas is invited to attend.



2015 Coffee Hour Changes

Due to limited number of people that volunteer to host coffee hour and rising costs, we are trying a new format.

Coffee hour will consist only of Coffee, Juice, and Conversation.

We will have special coffee hours on lesser church festivals and for special occasions. These will include our traditional sweet and savory refreshments.



Courage Fund Retired

What? How can that be? Well, an idea that was started six years ago reached its 5-year goal of \$75,000. Congratulations! And in 2014, gave another \$10,000 to organizations or individuals in need.

What comes next? Grace has always been a benevolent congregation – one focused on outside needs and causes. That is why our new benevolence fund is being titled **Graceful Giving**. The church budget, recently approved for 2015, does not include monies for charitable causes. In order to maintain our commitment to the world at large, contributions to Graceful Giving will be collected and distributed. Mark your donations for a specific cause or simply Graceful Giving fund and they will be held in a separate account. Requests for distribution will be reviewed by the committee and dispersed as readily as possible.

Our goal is to tithe 10% of the annual budget to causes unable to sustain themselves. This includes our budgeted dollars to the ELCA.

Won't you help? A donation each month to Graceful Giving ensures all of our needs will be met.

Thank you for your continued generosity.

In Christ's name,

Peg Haar, Anne Lawrence, Bob Lemont , Dan Nehring, and Bob Shoaf

GRACE NEWS & EVENTS



Breaking Bread Together:

January 10 @ 6:00pm

Breaking Bread Together will gather on Sat. Jan. 10 at 6:00 PM in Fellowship Hall to Celebrate our Heritage. Sign up on Dec. 28 or Jan. 4 in the hall to bring an appetizer, entrée, side or dessert. It can be an old family recipe or something from the country of your ancestors. BYOB. Everyone is welcome.

Hospitality Groceries



Add to your to-do list: buy a food donation for the Interfaith Hospitality Center.

Bring your gift to Grace on Sunday Jan. 18.

Your gifts help 25-50 people each day at the Hospitality Center. Thanks!

Nancy VanBrundt, Connie Wood and Sarah Carson

Breakfast Needs:

Juice - 5 half gallons

Hot Chocolate mix - 2 cans (not the kind that needs milk added)

Coffee - 1 large container

Peanut butter - 1 large creamy, 1 large crunchy

Jam/Jelly - 2 large jars

Instant Oatmeal - 5 boxes of individual packages

Syrup - 6 bottles

Sugar - 1 Five-pound bag

Creamer - 1 large container

Fruit

January Birthdays

Susan Graef (1/1)

Jim O'Connor (1/10)

Annabelle Johnson (1/16)

Charlesetta Watson (1/17)

Anne Laurence (1/19)

Janet Wright (1/19)

Paul Bailey (1/20)

Zinzi Steele (1/23)

Judith Ericksen (1/25)

Jack Sokol (1/26)

Nell Yarnall (1/28)

Zora Tallon Ruen (1/29)

Joanie Daye (1/30)

Sydell Reeves (1/31)

Scott Payton (1/31)

Jonah Wright (1/31)



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

JANUARY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

January 4

Presiding Pastor Daniel Ruen
Preaching Pastor Jen Rude
Assisting Minister Carolyn Utech
Music Director Mark Bowman
Lector Marilyn Grinager Mason
Cantor Stephanie Kulke
Acolyte Zinzi Steele
Ushers Sydell Reeves, Ann Stevens, Janet Wright
Coffee Hour Ann Stevens, Nancy Schubert
Altar Care Ginny Ayers, Jeanine Brownell
Godly Play Nancy Stewart
First Followers Pastor Kaari Reiersen
Nursery Care Nina Alvarez
Flowers Dorothy Nagelbach

January 11 - Baptism of Our Lord

Presiding Pastor Daniel Ruen
Preaching Pastor Daniel Ruen
Assisting Minister Jarrod Gaither
Organist Rachel Stark Inch
Lector Anne Shafer
Cantor Bonnie Gunzenhauser
Acolyte David Thacker
Ushers Sydell Reeves, Ann Stevens, Janet Wright
Coffee Hour* Nancy Stewart and Nancy Starkman
Altar Care Susan Graef, Nancy Schubert
Godly Play Jeanine & Amelia Brownell
First Followers TBD
Nursery Care Nancy Schubert
Flowers Jill Flaherty

January 18 - The Rev. Dr. MLK, Jr. Sunday at Grace

Presiding Pastor Daniel Ruen
Preaching Pastor Daniel Ruen
Assisting Minister Craig Gonder
Music Director Mark Bowman
Lector Bob Shoaf
Cantor Russ Kohnken
Acolyte Julia Shoaf
Ushers Nate Brown, Karla Daye, Jon Flaherty
Coffee Hour Joe & Vicki Mayne
Altar Care Susan Graef, Nancy Schubert
Godly Play Jeanine & Amelia Brownell
First Followers TBD
Nursery Care Deb Mitchell
Flowers Dee Johnson

January 25

Presiding Pastor Daniel Ruen
Preaching Pastor Daniel Ruen
Assisting Minister Claudia Perry
Music Director Mark Bowman
Lector Zora Tallon Ruen
Cantor Dominique Baptiste
Acolyte Alice Wilson
Ushers Nate Brown, Karla Daye, Jon Flaherty
Coffee Hour Kari & Randy Warren
Altar Care TBD
Godly Play Jeanine & Amelia Brownell
First Followers TBD
Nursery Care Ann Stevens
Flowers Ann Stevens

*Special Coffee Hour with refreshments- Baptism of Our Lord

Volunteer Opportunity:

First Followers, who are middle-school-age children, need volunteers to teach. Please contact Pastor Kaari Reiersen, kaari.reiersen@gmail.com or Jarrod Gaither, jarrod.gaither@gmail.com for more information.



Children's Christmas Pageant 2014



Adult Ed Kickoff Breakfast

Join us Jan. 11, at 9:30am, when we'll introduce the *Animate* curriculum. After the kickoff, four in-home small groups will meet. There will be 7 sessions, January through June, with dates and times to be determined by the group members. The curriculum is *Animate: adult exploration of the Bible* (Sparkhouse). In each session, the group will watch a video featuring a leading contemporary voice from the Christian faith, spend time on personal reflection and journaling, and share ideas with the group.

Group options:

1. Group Leader-Pastor Daniel.

Location: Grace Lutheran Church, 1430 South Blvd., Evanston, IL 60202

2. Group Leaders-Reggie Bruce and Nina Alvarez.

Location: 5357 N.E. River Road #101, Chicago, IL 60656

3. Group Leaders-Pastor Jen Rude and Deb Derylak.

Location: 1263 W. Ardmore Ave. #1, Chicago, IL 60660

4. Group Leaders-Susan and Ron Graef.

Location: 1928 Westleigh Dr., Glenview, IL 60025



Animate: Adult Bible Exploration (Sparkhouse)

Scope and Sequence: Animate Bible is a seven-session adult exploration of the Bible.

1. Canon: Mining of the Word—Eric Hines
2. History: Parchment to Pixel—Phyllis Tickle
3. Testaments: One Story, Two Parts—Rachel Held Evans
4. Gospels: Unexpected Good News—Nadia Bolz-Weber
5. Genre: Rhythm of the Text—Jose Morales
6. Interpretation: Scripture Reads Us—Will Willamon
7. Grace: Love is the Bottom Line—Jay Bakker

Why Animate: Bible?

- Animate poses questions people really have, and then encourages participants to respond.
- Animate features perspectives from Christian thought leaders that help shape discussion.
- Animate encourages participants to discuss, sketch, doodle, create, and share.
- Animate fosters an engaged, nuanced, and meaningful relationship with Scripture.
- Animate is based on Protestant theology, presenting sessions that are thoughtful, edgy, and interesting.
- Animate leaders act as guides, bringing the group to a gallery of ideas, showing them around a bit, and then letting them explore their ideas and understandings.

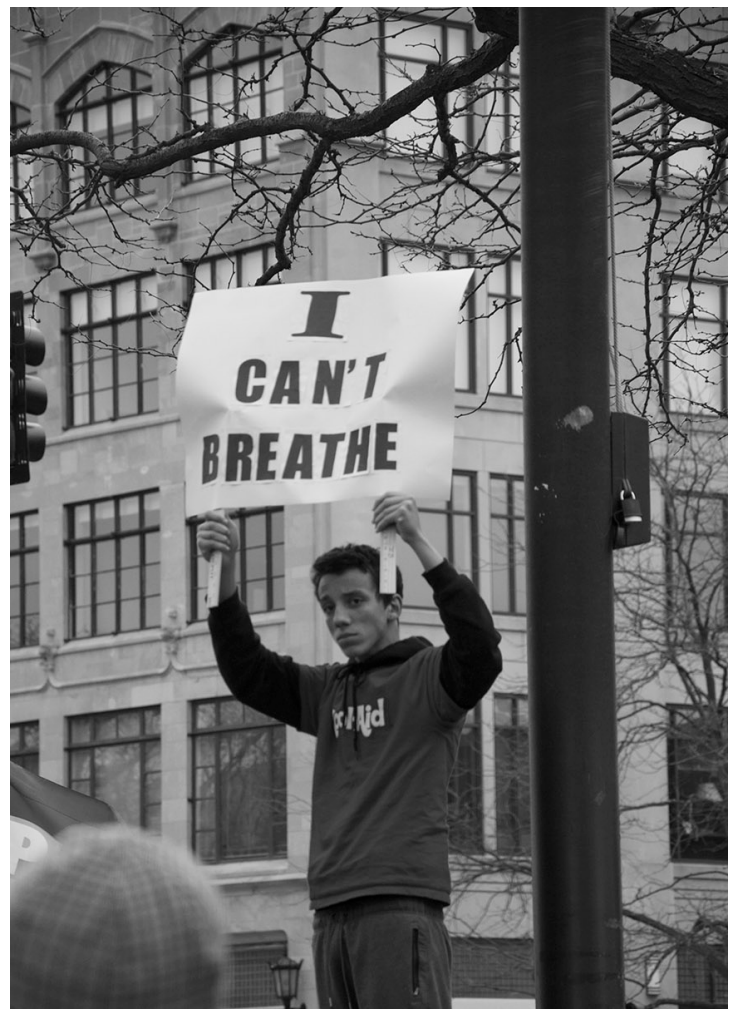
Vision Keepers Dinner - Sunday, Feb 15, 5:30 pm at the Hilton-Orrington Hotel

The Interfaith Action of Evanston cordially invites you to its annual fundraiser, the Vision Keepers Dinner. This year's Keynote speaker will be the Reverend Mark Dennis, CEO of the Evanston YMCA, former Pastor of the Second Baptist Church of Evanston.

This year, Grace is honoring Jarrod Gaither as our "vision keeper" for all he does, including faith development of Grace youth, partnership with other congregations' youth development, work at the Hospitality Center and work with the Northwestern Lutheran Campus Ministry.

Please consider joining Pastor Daniel and other Grace congregants at this fundraiser, whose proceeds support programs at the Hospitality Center, local soup kitchens, and winter warming center.

\$75/person. Make checks out to Grace with "Vision Keepers Dinner" in the memo line. RSVP/payment due Feb 1.



2015 Grace Budget and Stewardship

Grace members,

We will be taking time during the service on Feb. 1, 2015 to celebrate our 2015 budget. On Dec. 7, we approved a budget for the new year and reflected on 2014. Most notably, we have met our commitment to the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the E.L.C.A. of \$14,200! Additional benevolence through the Courage fund has totaled \$12,200. But that has not been the extent of our generous spirit, as Grace has made untold contributions of time, in-kind contributions (such as unreimbursed groceries for the Interfaith Hospitality Center of Evanston), and courage. We are truly blessed to be able to serve in God's Kingdom in many ways.

Facilitating that service is our staff and building. To cite just a few examples, we could not serve Y.O.U., the Samaritan Center, our youth, and our community without the use of our building; we could not advocate courageously through the Community Renewal Society, could not serve needy fellow members of the body of Christ, without leadership and guidance from Pastor Daniel; we could not worship so joyfully without Mark; we could not coordinate our actions and run the day-to-day operations without Marie (office manager) and Jackson (sexton).

Our 2015 budget is a reflection of the ways in which we serve. We serve with our money; we serve through our building and staff; we serve with our time, prayers, and effort. We serve because we are blessed and called by God to do so. Our budget of \$298,780, or \$5,745 per week is, as always, a leap of faith. It is only through the grace and generous spirit of Grace that we anticipate meeting our budget for 2014 and plan to do so for 2015.

We invite you to read the summary of the 2015 budget, and to reflect on how Grace can meet the opportunities, goals, and challenges set therein. Many of our members value pledging as a way to make more concrete their financial giving, we will do so during the service on Feb. 8.

Russ Kohnken, Treasurer



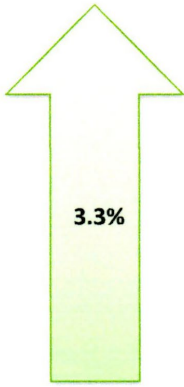
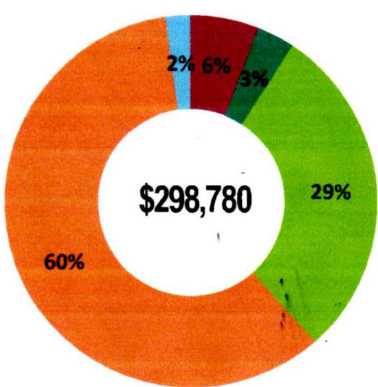
Sun, Dec 7, 2014

Overview

Description	Percentage	Amount
Partners in Ministry	6%	\$ 17,626
Action Ministries	3%	\$ 9,734
Operations	29%	\$ 87,601
The Staff of Grace	59%	\$ 177,320
Above the Beans	4%	\$ 6,500
Total Spending Plan		\$ 298,780

Proposed 2015 Budget

Partners in Ministry Action Ministries Operations
The Staff of Grace Above the Beans



Grace Lutheran Church
Annual Budget Meeting
December 7, 2014

Grace Lutheran Church held its annual budget meeting on December 7, 2014. A quorum was present with thirty-seven [37] voting Members of the congregation in attendance. Copies of the proposed budget were placed on the tables for members to review and reference during the meeting.

Pastor Daniel welcomed the assembly and the meeting opened with a prayer by Council President, Les Inch. Les then introduced Russ Kohnken, Treasurer and Nate Johnson, Council member and chair of Finance Committee.

Russ and Nate lead a discussion that included:

- Comparison of the 2013 – 2014 and 2015 [proposed] budgets
- Courage Fund with remarks from CF committee chair, Peg Harr
- Action Ministries
- Operations
- Staffing
- Stewardship

Highlights of 2014 budget review and status:

- Commitment to ELCA is on target for completion by 12/31/14 – a first in many years for the Grace Community.
- Contributions to and disbursements from the Courage Fund continued throughout the year. See Courage Fund Discussion below.
- Preliminary 2014 year end results suggest coming in on budget without deficit, in part due to congregational generous giving, a large lump sum principle mortgage payment and re-amortization of the mortgage loan which lowered the mortgage payments \$1,200 monthly.
- Final payment on a personal loan Grace received several years ago was made in 2014 and the loan retired.
- Capital Campaign: of the total \$385,575 pledged during the campaign, \$311,776 has been received thus far. Contributions on prior pledges continue to be received, and new contributions are welcomed.

Highlights of 2015 proposed budget discussion:

- Initial proposed budget showed no allocation for substitute pastors and musicians. Budget was revised to include \$1,500 for this purpose.
- Majority of operational line items are increased 3%, except property which was increased by 14% in anticipation of needed facility repairs.
- The largest change from the 2014 budget is a 36% increase for health and pension benefits due to changes in the Portico health plan. This increase includes 2.5% for disability insurance that Portico did not charged in 2014.
- Proposed budget reflects a salary increase for Office Administrator Marie O'Brien and contractual increase for Music Director Mark Bowman.
- In lieu of a salary increase, Pastor Daniel receives an additional week of vacation [6 days] and a Sunday off.
- See below for Courage Fund Discussion

Courage Fund:

Peg Harr reported the Courage Fund Committee met and decided to continue the spirit and mission of the Fund. Through November 2014, the Courage Fund has disbursed: \$4000 for emergency assistance; \$1950 Uptown Ministries; \$150 Translife center; \$150 LGBT asylum support; 750 Haitian Festivals; \$500 Triumph hall (LGBT housing); \$1,000 LSTC; \$200 Lutheran Immigration Relief; \$2,000 Northwestern Campus Ministry; \$500 Doctors without Borders; \$1,000 ELCA Ebola Response; and \$500 Setting the Table.

Stewardship:

A question was asked why there was no Stewardship Sunday prior to the annual budget meeting as in years past.

In part, Stewardship Sunday is an opportunity for those attending Grace to publicly “pledge” their financial support to pay the church’s coming year expenses. Historically, these pledge amounts were used to construct the church’s budget. However, over the past several years, the number of “pledges” received has declined and total amount pledged fallen far short of the revenue needed to cover the planned budget. For bookkeeping purposes, the variance between total expected expenses and the total pledged amounts was creatively called the “Leap of Faith.” For 2014, the “Leap” was 40% of the budget. For this reason, it was determined that pledges were not a useful metric for creating a budget.

The question raised, however, is an important one. Stewardship and pledges, whether public or personal, are important for many people and for other reasons. The Council had discussed having a Stewardship event separate from the budgeting process, although details have not been defined. The Council will follow up and discuss at its next meeting on December 18, 2014.

Communication:

There was also discussion on communicating with those members not present at this budget meeting. This will be part of the Stewardship event planning, as will via GraceNotes and the Harbinger.

Budget Approval:

A motion to approve the budget was made by Lynn Otte and seconded by Bob Lamont. There being no further discussion, a vote was taken and the budget passed unanimously.

Approved Budget Overview:

With a total spending plan of \$298,780, the approved 2015 budget reflects a 3.3% increase over 2014. Organized into five categories, the budget includes 1] Partners In Ministry: support for the work of the worldwide church / ELCA and Emergency Assistance; 2] Action Ministries: Faith Development and Outreach, Conferences and Assemblies, Music, Worship, and Youth Ministry; 3] Operations: mortgage, utilities, property, insurance and office expenses; 4] Staff of Grace: Salaries, Pastor Housing Allowance, Employment taxes, professional fees and expenses, and health and pension; and 5] “Above the Beans”: includes in-kind and pass-through contributions.

Meeting was adjourned with prayer.

Submitted by Les Inch

A Pastoral Letter to White Americans

by Jim Wallis 12-11-2014

The stories of young black men being killed by white police are sparking a national conversation. However, public responses to these painful stories reveal an alarming racial divide. From an unarmed teenager killed in Ferguson, Mo.; to a 12 year-old boy shot dead in Cleveland; to a white police officer on video choking a black man to death in New York City; and a startling series of similar stories from across the country and over many decades — our reactions show great differences in white and black perspectives.

Many white Americans tend to see this problem as unfortunate incidents based on individual circumstances. Black Americans see a system in which their black lives matter less than white lives. That is a fundamental difference of experience between white and black Americans, between black and white parents, even between white and black Christians. The question is: Are we white people going to listen or not?

White Americans talk about how hard and dangerous police work is — that most cops are good and are to be trusted. Black Americans agree that police work is dangerously hard, but also have experienced systemic police abuse of their families. All black people, especially black men, have their own stories. Since there are so many stories, are these really just isolated incidents? We literally have two criminal justice systems in America — one for whites and one for blacks.

Are there police uses of force that are understandable and justifiable? Of course there are. If our society wasn't steeped in a gun culture, many of these shootings could be avoided. But has excessive, unnecessary, lethal force been used over and over again, all across the country, with white police killing unarmed black civilians? Yes it has, and the evidence is overwhelming.

Will white parents try to imagine how it would feel to have “the talk,” to tell their own children that they shouldn't trust those who are supposed to serve and protect them? That's hard to listen to, hard to hear, hard to recognize the legitimacy of other parents' experiences when they are so different from your own.

It's time to listen — for us white Americans to listen to black Americans; for white parents to listen to black parents; for white Christians to listen to black Christians. This may be the most important thing we have ever had to do: to listen, really listen.

Do we believe what we say about the unity of “the body of Christ” or not? In the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 12 speaks of one body with many members.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.... For the body does not consist of one member but of many... As it is, there are many parts, yet one body... that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. (RSV)

Another version of 1 Corinthians 12:26 translates, “If one part suffers every part shares its suffering.” What would it mean to share in the suffering of our brothers and sisters of color who suffer from a racialized criminal justice system?

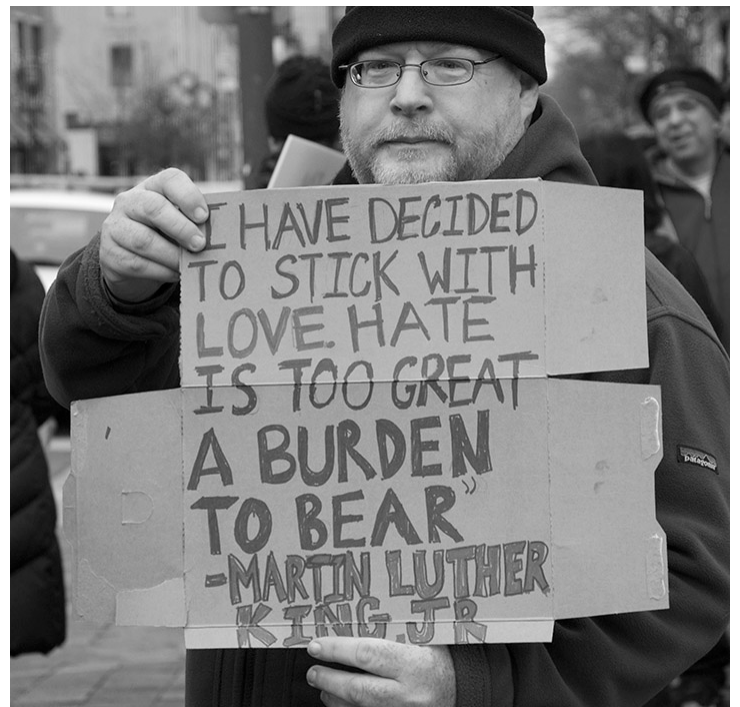
Racial reconciliation is a commitment at the heart of the gospel. If we say we belong to Christ, that mission of reconciliation is ours too. What does racial reconciliation mean now in the face of America's racial divide over policing and the criminal justice system?

Let's get practical. If you have African Americans at your workplace or at your church, ask them to please talk to you about this, to tell you their stories — then listen. If you don't have any black or other members of color in your church, it's time to ask why. Reach out — and ask your pastor to reach out — to black and Hispanic churches in your community or city. We must find safe and authentic ways to hear each others' stories, across the racial boundaries of our churches.

Reach out sensitively to black parents at your children's schools. Ask to hear their stories. Talk to the black parents of your children's classmates and teammates. Or maybe it's time to realize not having children of color at your children's school or on their teams is a big part of the problem. Parents talking to parents and hearing each others' stories may be the most important key to moving forward in the church and in the nation.

White people need to stop talking so much, stop defending the systems that protect and serve them, and stop saying “I'm not a racist.” If white people turn a blind eye to systems that are racially biased, we can't be absolved from the sin of racism. Listen to the people the justice system fails to serve and protect; try to see the world as they do. Loving our neighbors means identifying with their suffering, meeting them in it, and working together to change it. And, for those of us who are parents, loving our neighbors means loving other people's kids as much as we love our own.

Jim Wallis is president of Sojourners. His book, The (Un)Common Good: How the Gospel Brings Hope to a World Divided, the updated and revised paperback version of On God's Side, is available now. Follow Jim on Twitter @JimWallis.



MARTIN LUTHER KING JR DAY
FAITH IN ACTION ASSEMBLY
JANUARY 19, 2015



- ♦ **Have your voice and the concerns of your community heard by public officials**
- ♦ **Reclaim the prophetic voice of Dr. King by joining the groundswell of congregations working for real change across the state**
- ♦ **Win victories to PREVENT VIOLENCE and END UNJUST INCARCERATION**

ACT TO REPAIR JUSTICE, RESTORE LIVES & REBUILD COMMUNITY!

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere

JOIN US: Faith in Action Assembly

The Assembly will include prayer and historical witness to Dr. King's legacy, a public meeting with decision makers, and action items on current campaigns.

**WHEN: Monday, January 19th
9:30am - 12pm**

**WHERE: Liberty Baptist Church
4849 S. Martin Luther King Drive, Chicago**

COMMUNITYRENEWALSOCIETY

For more information contact:

Ryan Wallace
312.673.3852

rwallace@communityrenewalsociety.org

January Calendar

Every Sunday 10:45 Worship followed by coffee hour

Sunday School during worship

- Jan 1** New Year's Day; Grace Office Closed
Jan 7 Women's Breakfast Group, 9:30am
Jan 10 Planning Meeting: 2Ignite Service, 10am
Breaking Bread Together, 6:00pm
Jan 11 Adult Ed Kickoff Breakfast, 9:30am
Jan 19 Faith in Action Assembly for MLK Day, 10am at
Liberty Baptist Church, 4849 S. MLK Drive in Chicago
Jan 25 Generations 6-wk Series Begins, 9:30am
Book Group chez Stark Inch: The Imperfectionists
by T. Rachman

Please note that Jan 2-9 Marie will be on vacation so office hours will be limited

Grace Church Council

Les Inch, *Council President*

Taína Rodriguez Encarnación, Martha Fry, Jarrod Gaither,
Nate Johnson, Dorothy Nagelbach, Holly O'Connor, Laura Wally

JANUARY



Find us at:

GraceEvanston.org • facebook.com/graceevanston

Grace

Grace Lutheran Church of Evanston
1430 South Blvd.
Evanston, IL 60202
Voice: 847.475.2211
Fax: 847.869.9442