



Harbinger

www.graceevanston.org • churchoffice@graceevanston.org

November 2014

**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

Steal This Bible

by Pastor Daniel



One of my favorite church stories is about a group of altar care volunteers who break into the pastor's office one Sunday morning with some awful news: someone has been stealing Bibles from the pews.

The pastor asks them how many have been stolen. "Several!" they exclaim. "Were they stolen all at one time?" asks the pastor. "No," explains the team, "we've realized that, here and there, a Bible seems to be disappearing once every couple of months or so."

The pastor says, "I want you to repeat the problem to me, just so you can hear yourselves say it." The team looks bewildered. One of them finally begins again, "Pastor: someone is stealing the Bibles, they are taking the Word of God out of our church and...oh. I see."

If the church is not primarily about sharing the grace of God unreservedly, with no strings attached, then what exactly are we doing? In the spirit of Abbie Hoffman's famous work, *"Steal this Book,"* the Grace worship team would like to encourage a new culture of how we relate to the Bible at Grace. We might even say, *'Steal This Bible.'*

This last summer the team talked about the accelerating decline of the Lutheran denomination and

so many other liberal Christian churches. We are inspired by conversations percolating after our first IGNITE retreat last spring. IGNITE is challenging the congregation to confront this stark, unfolding reality by considering bold, transformational change initiatives for Grace.

One of the things we realized is that we are mostly afraid of the Bible as a mainline Lutheran culture, and this might have something to do with the way we come across to the wider world. We have, over the years, ceded the scriptures in various ways to our pastors, seminaries, theologians, and our more theologically and politically conservative sisters and brothers. We, as a church culture, do not have an easy way to access our core values about who we think God is in the person of Jesus Christ by engaging with the Bible.

Martin Luther once said that the Bible is the "Cradle of the Gospel." It is not the Gospel, however. The Bible is not God. It is not to be used as a false idol, as many of us surmise while we see it being waved around like a blunt tool to shame, judge and destroy others. The distinction Lutherans make is that we preach Christ and not the Bible. Sometimes we even need to preach Jesus over against the Bible itself.

Continued on next page

2IGNITE

2IGNITE Retreat Join the Grace congregation for an exciting day and a half of amazing food, music, conversation and prayer.

We had a tremendous retreat in April of 2014, and now the IGNITE Visioning Team is ready to present its work to you for consideration. We continue to pursue compelling, bold ideas of transformational ministry. We will gather for a feast on Friday night, November 14 and, after an evening of keynotes and

conversation, we'll have closing prayer in the courtyard around a large bonfire.

On Saturday morning, the 15th, we'll continue the presentations and discussion, eating lunch together and then wrap things up by 2pm. All members will receive a phone invitation to the retreat, and we hope you will attend if you can. If you have any questions please speak to Council Chair Les Inch or Pastor Daniel!

The rub for us more liberal Christians, however, is that if we don't take the time to find the God of wisdom and grace as she is rooted in the scriptures (check Proverbs, Chapter 8), we not only lose out on understanding the force and focus of Jesus' message, we lose out on the rich tapestry of ancient literature, poetry, narrative, politics and sociology of the Bible.

We also come to the table woefully unprepared when engaging with the wider world. It is simply not accurate to claim we are all the same. People want to know why we believe what we believe whether they are atheists, agnostics, more conservative Christians, or sisters and brothers of other faiths. With rigor, honest questions, doubts and inspiration, always hunting with hope for the Good News within it, we can discover a Bible that better equips us for encountering ourselves, our community, and our world.

When I was a college kid attending Torah Study I had a teacher named Earl Schwarz who once threw the Bible on the table and said, "This is a dead thing. It's just repurposed trees and ink laid out in patterns. It has no life, no breath, unless we open it up, engage with it, hit it with all we've got—and watch the sparks fly."

I am dedicating my donated Bibles to Earl and Rabbi Yossi Gordon, two teachers who revealed to me the freedom and excitement of what a life informed by the scriptures might look like. There are pink forms in the sanctuary for populating our pews and Sunday School rooms with NRSV Bibles. I hope you might consider your own donation and dedication.

And if you do, maybe you should add a couple more for the stolen ones we'll have to joyfully replace.

The Peace and Joy of Christ, Pastor Daniel

Generations Class

This year we have 14 confirmation-age students, the largest group I've ever experienced at Grace. Martha Fry, Jarrod Gaither and I decided to take a leap of faith and re-imagine what confirmation might look like, asking ourselves to determine the ultimate goal of faith formation. After consulting various resources and gathering info from several of my colleagues, we chose a completely different model than Grace has traditionally practiced. The parents of each student are required to be our partners in the faith education of their child. While I was nervous about proposing it, every parent who was issued the challenge has responded with excitement and a firm commitment.

At our first session we had 35 people in Fellowship Hall for an hour of multi-generational faith discussion and activities. For this reason, and because of the thrust of its pedagogy, I decided to rename confirmation 'Generations.' We meet at 9:30am in Fellowship Hall for three six-week sessions throughout the year, beginning with a course on Jesus (ending on Sunday, November 16th) using the SparkHouse youth curriculum. We spend time as a large group, as parents sharing with their children, and then as adults and youth in separate discussion/activity groups. ALL adults are welcome to join us for a refresher on basic Christian history, theology and the Bible. We plan on participating with the larger confirmation cluster in Evanston, as well as attending the Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Center this summer.

At the end of two years of instruction, parents and students will work to select a justice, service, or arts cause that speaks to them, working with me and other mentors to craft a scriptural study and rationale, as well as host a celebration event. Please pray for this new inspiration, one that holds much potential in our congregation. Feel free to speak to me if you have any questions or would like to help with scholarship support for summer camp!

- PD

Interfaith Hospitality Center Collection November 16

hospitality |häspitalitē|; noun

The friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers. See also Matthew 25:35

One of the directives Christians received from Jesus was to show hospitality to all of God's people. One of the ways Grace Church does that is participation and support of the Interfaith Hospitality Center.

The Center is located at St. Mark's Episcopal Church on Ridge in Evanston. Five days a week, fifty-two weeks a year the center is open to assist the homeless. The center provides a breakfast, job counseling, caseworkers, a location for attending to personal grooming, and making phone calls about jobs and apartments. On a daily basis 35-50 guests use the center.

Once a month Grace congregation donates food for the breakfast offering. A trunk load of fresh food and breakfast items is taken to the Center on the third Monday of the month. That food comes from donations from the congregation in both actual food items

and money to purchase approximately \$100.00-150.00 worth of fresh food. Food is collected on the third Sunday of the Month.

You can help with this mission by bringing food (see list below) or donating money, and by praying for the clients, staff, and volunteers. It's just another way to demonstrate God's Work. Our Hands.



Food Items for the Hospitality Center

Half gallon of fruit juice	A bag of sugar
A box of tea	A can of coffee
Large size Peanut butter, creamy or crunchy	Hot chocolate mix (not the kind that uses milk)
Large size Jam/jelly	Large container of creamer
A box of instant oatmeal	A bottle of syrup

All Saints Day Ofrenda on November 2

Día de los Muertos, the Day of the Dead, is an ancient Aztec celebration of loved ones who have died. It is celebrated for 2 nights and 3 days around the same time as our All Saints Day. Many Latin American people believe that this is a time when the veil between life and death is very thin and the dead return home to visit, feast, and listen to music. In their homes, the family honors and celebrates their deceased with ofrendas or offerings. They give thanks for the lives of the people they loved and also recognize the importance of life itself.



Here at Grace we have adopted some of these practices for our All Saints Day on Sunday, November 2. We honor the everyday saints who were in our lives and for whom we feel gratitude. We make a table and fill it with offerings that our loved ones enjoyed and with pictures of them. We tell stories about our dear saints and sing hymns about the saints who went before us.

How can you be involved? First, think about whom you would like to remember. (It can be more than one person.) Ask yourself: what did this person love when he/she was alive? What food or drink or flowers or games? What did he/she like to do? What did he/she like to wear? Second, bring an item or 2 representing each person you want to remember to church. You may drop this off in the church office (clearly labeled who it is from) or you may bring it on Saturday, November 1 from 10:00 to 11:00 or on Sunday, November 2 at 9:30. Third, come to church at 9:30 on that Sunday and share your stories with all the other members who have brought their memories of loved ones. The items will be placed on the table and remain there through the All Saints Day worship service. Fourth, if you do not wish to bring an item or tell a story, just come at 9:30 to listen and support all those who are there.

If you would like to help set up the table, please come to church at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, November 1. It should take about an hour to put it together. We will not only place the items on the table, we will also decorate it with traditional skulls made of sugar and foil and with bright paper picado. Flowers are always welcome as part of the offerings or ofrenda.

If you have questions, please email me at carolyndave@att.net or call me at 312-441-9631.

Carolyn Utech



Choir Dates

The Grace choir's regular monthly rehearsal will be on Sunday, November 9th, at 12:15 PM. All singers welcome to join with the choir.

A special rehearsal to work on Advent and Christmas music will be on Saturday morning, November 22 at 10:00 AM. Direct questions to Mark at markleby@comcast.net

GRACE NEWS & EVENTS



Save the Date:

Annual Budget Meeting
Sunday, December 7, 2014,
following the worship service
in Fellowship Hall.

Book Group

Our next book group will meet on January 25, 2015 at our house (Les and Rachel Stark Inch), 5837 N. Talman, Chicago, 60659. We will discuss *The Imperfectionists* by Tom Rachman.

Then in March (date and place to be determined) we will discuss *The Goldfinch* by Donna Tartt.

Future book possibilities:

Americanah by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay* by Michael Chabon.

Also recommended (but not necessarily for our future discussions) was *Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us and What We Can Do*, by social psychologist Claude Steele.

This book was "One Book One Northwestern" selection this year for incoming college freshman. For those interested, he will be speaking on Monday, December 8th at 7:00, Evanston Township High School.

Happy reading!



November Birthdays

Kwesi Steele (11/4)
Bill Blackburn (11/5)
Amelia Brownell (11/6)
Larry Yarbrough (11/6)
Terence Blain (11/9)
Reggie Bruce (11/10)
Samara Payton (11/12)
Ben Shoaf (11/18)
Meg Vinson (11/18)
Carolyn Utech (11/20)
Martha Fry (11/21)
Anne Shafer (11/23)
Christine O'Connor (11/24)
Clare Tallon Ruen (11/25)
Jason Brunger (11/28)



CROP Walk Thank You, Final Donations

Thank you to everyone who participated in this year's CROP Hunger Walk!

It was a success, with just under 300 walkers and over \$35,000 (and still counting!) for hunger relief locally and worldwide.

If you were hoping to contribute, but weren't available for the walk, you can give your donation to Jarrod, who will forward it to the CROP treasurer.

Thank you!

NOVEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

November 2 - All Saints Ofrenda

Presiding Pastor Daniel Ruen
Preaching Pastor Daniel Ruen
Assisting Minister Jarrod Gaither
Music Director Mark Bowman
Lector Zora Tallon Ruen
Cantor Caitlin Sellnow
Acolyte Zinzi Steele
Ushers Sarah Carson, Les Inch, Nancy Schubert
Coffee Hour Rina Campbell, Peter Spies
Altar Care Susan Graef, Nancy Schubert
Godly Play Clare Tallon Ruen, Kwesi Steele
First Followers Kaari Reiersen
Nursery Care Nancy Schubert
Flowers Dee Johnson

November 9

Presiding Pastor Daniel Ruen
Preaching Pastor Daniel Ruen
Assisting Minister Carolyn Utech
Music Director Mark Bowman
Lector Peg Haar
Cantor Jan Blackburn
Acolyte David Thacker
Ushers Jan Blackburn, Bob Shoaf, Cecilia Galicia
Coffee Hour Sue Graef, Ron Graef
Altar Care Susan Graef, Nancy Schubert
Godly Play Kevin Dostal Dauer, Dan Nehring
First Followers Kaari Reiersen
Nursery Care Deb Mitchell
Flowers Dorothy Nagelbach

November 16

Presiding Pastor Daniel Ruen
Preaching Pastor Daniel Ruen
Assisting Minister Claudia Perry
Music Director Mark Bowman
Lector Lynn Otte
Cantor Reggie Bruce
Acolyte Julia Shoaf
Ushers Jan Blackburn, Bob Shoaf, Cecilia Galicia
Coffee Hour Ann Stevens, Nancy Schubert
Altar Care Ginny Ayers, Jeanine Brownel
Godly Play Kaari Reiersen, Martha Fry
First Followers Jarrod Gaither
Nursery Care Ann Stevens
Flowers Ann Stevens

November 23 - Christ the King Sunday

Presiding Pastor Daniel Ruen
Preaching Pastor Daniel Ruen
Assisting Minister Jarrod Gaither
Music Director Mark Bowman
Lector Jill Flaherty
Cantor Bonnie Gunzenhauser
Acolyte Alice Wilson
Ushers Sydell Reeves, Ann Stevens, Janet Wright
Coffee Hour Bob Lamont, Gail Lamont
Altar Care Ginny Ayers, Jeanine Brownell
Nursery Care Nina Alvarez
Flowers Jan Blackburn

November 30 - First Sunday in Advent

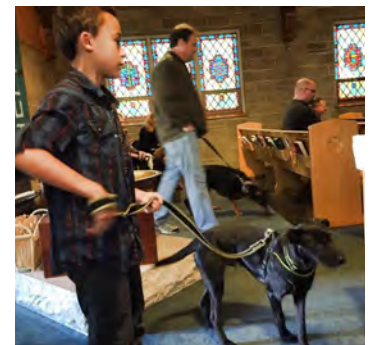
Presiding Pastor Daniel Ruen
Preaching Pastor Daniel Ruen
Assisting Minister Craig Gonder
Music Director Mark Bowman
Lector Nina Alvarez
Cantor Dominique Baptiste
Acolyte Emma Mosco Flint
Ushers Sydell Reeves, Ann Stevens, Janet Wright
Coffee Hour Kim Brown, Danny Brown
Altar Care Nancy Mathyer, Ann Stevens
Nursery Care Nancy Schubert

Worship Notes for November/Advent

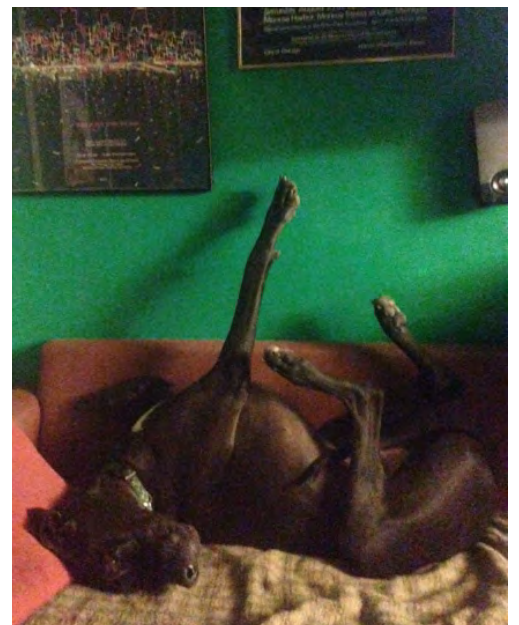
November kicks off with our annual All Saints' Mexican Ofrenda on Sunday, November 2nd. We will gladly receive pictures and other keepsakes of those who have died in the days leading up to November 2nd to be carefully placed on the Ofrenda. Or, you may come before worship at 9:30am to place your items and then remain for a hosted time of sharing stories and memories. During worship we will ring the bell for all who have died in the past year, as well as welcome all up to the Ofrenda to light candles.

It's hard to believe that Christ the King Sunday follows shortly after on November 23rd, and then it's the first Sunday of Advent on November 30th. Our Advent Planning team is being formed and we plan to host three midweek services on Wednesday nights, with a simple supper of soup and bread beforehand. Look for more info in Gracenotes and your bulletin.

I look forward to seeing you all at
The Welcome Table! - PD



Grace Pet Blessing



... at home after the blessing...

by Carol Jors

Lutheran Day brings people together to pursue the common good

On Lutheran Day, people come together to raise a collective voice and be counted for the sake of God's precious children, youth, women, and men in need of special care.

On May 13, 2014, Lutherans gathered at St. John's Lutheran Church in Springfield to worship, hear a keynote address about Abraham Lincoln and his views on the government serving the common good, and prepare for visits to legislators at the state Capitol. Friends from across Illinois came together to express a common commitment to the care of people in our communities.

Attendees represented social ministries and human care organizations, different political affiliations, and Lutheran congregations throughout Illinois to exercise Christian vocation and to speak out for justice and compassion for all people, especially for those who are most vulnerable.

Advocacy is essential

Janet Kittlaus of Glenview has attended many Lutheran Day events over the years. Involved in the ministries of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) for more than 40 years, she remembers a time when advocacy was not considered an important supplement to the church's social ministry.

"It took us a while to understand that loving thy neighbor requires involvement in the public arena, involvement which seeks justice especially for our most vulnerable neighbors," she says. "Lutheran Day helps us develop and hone our advocacy skills."

To do advocacy well requires learning about important policy issues and building relationships with public officials. Lutheran Day shows lawmakers that Lutherans are committed to the common good. And Lutheran Day, through worship, fellowship, and of course, food, builds camaraderie among Lutheran advocates in Illinois.

Years ago, Janet became involved in LSSI's Prisoner and Family Ministry. That involvement helped her see the injustices suffered

by many in our society. "It also convinced me that advocacy is an essential part of our ministry as Christians," she says. "We are challenged to follow the example of Jesus who served those on the margins of society and spoke out when those in authority abused power."

Kittlaus got involved because "it's one of the things we do as Christians. I knew the good work LSSI was doing and in particular got involved in prison and family ministry, believing in justice and mercy, and becoming a strong proponent of abolishing the death penalty."

In her experience, it's a myth that people want to be dependent on the government. "People want to help themselves," she says. "Getting someone back to work, keeping a family together, helping people to become better parents—all of these create a more stable community. And when folks no longer need support services, they become contributing, taxpaying members of the community! There is a social and economic benefit to helping others."

This is why advocacy and events like Lutheran Day are essential.

"We must convince our fellow citizens and our lawmakers that we are a stronger, more prosperous society when we provide for the common good," adds Kittlaus. "Our legislators want to hear from us. Lutherans have an enormous impact when we engage in the ministry of advocacy."

Lutheran agencies involved in Lutheran Day 2014 included: Advocate Health Care, Bethesda Lutheran Communities, Concordia Place, Holy Family Ministries, Lutheran Advocacy of Illinois, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois, Mosaic, and Saint Luke Ministries. For more information on Lutheran Day, visit LutheranDay.org. 2014 marked the 10th anniversary of Lutheran Day.

Reprinted with permission from the fall 2014 issue of Inspired, the magazine of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI).



Janet Kittlaus

ELCA NEWS - October 21, 2014

ELCA members raise awareness of suicide prevention

CHICAGO (ELCA) – Since they lost their daughter, Terri Ann, to suicide in 1987, Jerry and Elsie Weyrauch, members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), have been motivated to help make a difference in the lives of those who are affected by suicide. They have spent the past 27 years working to raise awareness of suicide prevention and the issues that lead to suicidal behavior.

"There are no words that you can use. You can't make it better; you can't make it go away," said Jerry Weyrauch. "You have to go through things. You can't go around or under them. You have to go through them and you have to integrate them into your life and you become a new and different person."

The couple, along with their four living children, vowed they would always be honest when talking about Terri Ann's death.

"As our family gathered for the funeral, we had a family meeting and made the very conscious decision that we were not going to be slaves to a secret and that we were going to openly and honestly tell folks that Terri died by suicide," said Weyrauch.

That openness about the nature of their daughter's death inspired the Weyrauch family to advocate on behalf of other families affected by suicide.

"We want to identify survivors because many of them are like us in that when you wake up every morning you have what I call fire

in the belly that is renewed each and every morning, that you're going to do everything you can to make a difference. And that motivation in survivors of suicide is the kind of motivation we hope Christians have to follow," said Weyrauch.

"We made a commitment at that time that we were going to do all that we could to keep this from happening to other people," he said. "And so I got involved in trying to figure out what was going on in suicide prevention."

The Weyrauchs, members of Lutheran Church of the Resurrection in Marietta, Ga., formed the Suicide Prevention Action Network (SPAN), a national organization of suicide survivors. These grassroots advocacy efforts eventually led to the 2001 National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, a joint effort by the federal Office of the Surgeon General and the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention.

"Having worked in the public sector and made an achievement there, we felt that one of the largest populations that was untouched and represented an identifiable market segment was faith communities. We decided it was time to turn to trying our attention to engage the church in suicide prevention."

In 2010 the Weyrauchs established the Lutheran Suicide Prevention Ministry, dedicated to implementing the ELCA social messages on suicide prevention and mental illness. The ministry's mission is to reduce the number of people who die by suicide through awareness, education and advocacy actions that reduce the stigma of suicide.

In 1999 the ELCA Church Council adopted the "Message on Suicide Prevention" as a "call to members, congregations and affiliated institutions to learn more about suicide and its prevention in their communities, to ask what they can do and to work with others to prevent suicide." Such social messages of the ELCA are documents on specific topics adopted by the ELCA Church Council to focus attention and action on timely, pressing matters of social concern to this church and society.

Reflecting on the adoption of the social message, the Rev. Cheryl Beck, program director for ELCA disability ministries said, "There was recognition (in 1999) that it was important for the church to be a leader in talking about a subject that is often kept secret and considered shameful. Most important, it is an opportunity to move beyond the tragic brokenness of life to the news that can bring hope."

Answering the call to learn more about suicide prevention, Community of the Living Spirit, an ELCA new-start congregation in Indianapolis, will co-host an event Nov. 8 as part of the city's 2014 Spirit and Place Festival. The event will help shed light on the issues surrounding suicide and share ways to respond to people who may be at risk. Conversations will center on depression, addiction, suicide and mental health.

"I believe that following the example of Christ means that the church is called to be present in places of pain and despair. I can't think of a situation more painful and desperate than when someone is wrestling with whether or not to end his or her own life," said the Rev. Carolyn Lesmeister, mission developer at Community of the Living Spirit.

"The sense of isolation that happens when you or someone you love is struggling with such things can be a significant barrier to healing," said Lesmeister. "The church ought to be equipped to sit with people in their pain, to be present with them, to listen with love and compassion, and to speak a message of hope into the hopelessness," she said.

Following the suicide of an ELCA pastor at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Muncie, Ind., Jerry Weyrauch met with the associate pastor and members of the congregation.

"That just hit me in the stomach. I never thought a pastor could complete a suicide," said Weyrauch. "No one knows what to do."

Gafkjen said his role as bishop was "to come up alongside both (the associate pastor) and the family, especially his wife and the congregation, all of whom were the survivors of this."

During that time Gafkjen also met with clergy from other denominations in the area, all of whom were affected by the pastor's suicide.

"Talking with them I realized just how ill-equipped many of us in professional ministry are for dealing with this," said Gafkjen. "And yet, truth be told, I think many of us have come into contact with a family or a person who's been affected by suicide."

Gafkjen said honest answers about their pastor's suicide helped the congregation of Holy Trinity in their healing process.

"The first thing that occurs to me is just finding ways to be honest and open about the fact that suicide happens among people who are faithful Christians," he said. "And that seems to open the door to a whole lot of other forms of honesty and openness about our own feelings, senses of guilt and responsibility as well as theological questions, and even honesty about our own struggles that I think we have not been good about as a church."

"It just really struck me at that time how often we kind of brush this stuff into the shadows rather than dealing with it in the light," said Gafkjen. "And (the pastor's) family really led the way by bringing it into the light so that we could have open and honest conversations with each other about it."

"What the church can offer is a compassionate, loving, supportive community that can break through some of the isolation that is so common with depression and suicide," she said. "People who can say, regularly, honestly, and with conviction, 'You are beloved, by God and by us. Your presence matters, you matter. Please stay.'"

Information and resources are available at <http://www.elca.org/en/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Messages/Suicide-Prevention>. For information contact:

Candice Hill Buchbinder

773-380-2877 or Candice.HillBuchbinder@ELCA.org

<http://www.ELCA.org/news>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/Lutherans>

November Calendar

Every Sunday 10:45 Worship followed by coffee hour

Sunday School during worship

Nov 1 St. Nick's Christmas Service Project, 5:30
Nov 2 All Saints Sunday with Ofrenda
Christmas Greens Orders Due
Nov 4 Election Day: Vote!
Nov 14-15 *All Congregation Retreat*
Nov 23-30 Family Promise



Find us at:

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Grace

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