



# Harbinger

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Summer 2017

## 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.

**Summer Schedule:**  
**10:00am**  
**Worship Service**  
**Every Sunday**

**Rev. Daniel Ruen**  
Pastor  
pd@graceevanston.org

•  
**Mark Bowman**  
Music Director

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

•  
**Marie O'Brien**  
Parish Administrator

•  
**Jackson DeLeon-Lopez**  
Sexton

## People of the Way

Pastor Daniel



On May 23rd, at 6am in the morning, I drove down to Chenoa, IL with Rabbi Andrea London of Beth Emet Synagogue in Evanston. We decided to give feet to our faith and join the March to Springfield, a 200 mile pilgrimage to raise awareness about the ongoing state budget impasse.

We met the marchers at a gazebo in small town Chenoa, where we were first led in a series of spirited exercises by a 91 year-old man named Al. Al wore a helmet, knee pads, elbow pads, galoshes, and full rain gear. He'd committed to walking all 200 miles of the march down to the State Capitol, and he looked to be doing better than 90% of us who were preparing to walk 10 miles in the rain that day. Al is a member of the Jane Addams Senior Caucus, and he feels very strongly about securing a state budget for so many of his fellow seniors, whose services and support have been decimated for lack of a state budget.

After some logistics and information about the day, we set out for Lexington, IL. As we marched along the frontage road and side streets, looking for the safest route, it was natural to pull up alongside another marcher, and begin an unhurried conversation.

I met people like Erica who, coincidentally, was arrested with me at the Moral Mondays event when we blocked the door of Ken Griffith's 'Citadel' office in downtown Chicago (Griffith is a billionaire supporter of Governor Rauner. We were trying to draw attention to the problem of big money in politics, and the overall income inequality that makes the state budget crisis so much worse). I heard Erica's entire life story, and found out why she feels called as a Christian to march, to take action, and to put her livelihood on the line.

I met a young woman from eastern Europe who had recently graduated from college. She is undocumented, as are her parents. They own and operate a trucking dispatch company in Chicago, employing dozens of people. It was an important reminder of how current immigrant rhetoric is so racialized; we forget that

many different people are affected by the barriers being thrown up in the name of 'America First.' Here was yet another family already working incredibly hard, paying taxes, trying to make their lives and the lives of their employees

great, reflecting our country's immigrant history, and our fading promise to receive 'your poor, your tired, your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free.'

I reconnected with an older woman who is an organizer for ONE Northside. She was moved to tears by the march's philosophy of doing listening sessions along the route. The group just had a profound dialogue engagement with residents of a nearby town two nights prior. The local residents were much more conservative than the marchers, but they found many powerful similarities in terms of their mutual concern for lack of a state budget. They also shared strikingly similar values when it came to equal rights, income inequality, and health care.

I met a gay, African American, Baptist activist who talked about his own battles with homelessness and despair. As he wore his safety vest, ushering us to the side of the road when cars approached, he described his feelings about this pilgrimage, to show how important it is for our wider society members to take care of one another.

The stories go on and on. Rabbi Andrea and I also had sustained time to converse about Evanston, about our families, about theology, and the rich Christian/Jewish partnership we've begun together.



### People of the Way, continued

We were People of the Way, all of us, whether we were Christian or not. That's what we were first named in the Acts of the Apostles: 'The WAY.' We were people of the road (the word, 'way,' in the New Testament is the Greek word for 'road,' or 'path'). The 200 mile road that stretched toward Springfield, IL, also stretched forebodingly into rain, cold, and unfamiliar towns, farms, and hamlets. But it stretched just as far into our imaginations, and just as far into deepened relationships that surprised and delighted us, a road that was abundant with yearning, joy, and intention.

The March will culminate in a large gathering (the organizers are hoping for 500+ people) at the State Capitol on Tuesday, May 30th. I will be there, standing with my fellow marchers and so many other people of the way who yearn for a path that might lead all people of Illinois to a place of security, accountability, and genuine love and respect.

**Pastor Daniel**



### Worship Notes

We had a tremendous Lent and Easter at Grace! Our Lenten planning team (Sally Schleker, Connie Wood, Carmelo Alvarez, Carl Brownell, Mark Bowman, and myself) provided for a rich array of ways to encounter the Spirit of God during Lent. Everything from moving testimonies about one another's baptisms, to rich theological reflections by Pastor Carmelo, to tactile items symbolizing baptism being placed in your midst every week, to the beginning of online Bible Study (7pm every Wednesday on the Grace Facebook page).

As we finish up the 50-day festival of Easter, we look forward to a Jam-Packed June. Reconciling in Christ (RIC) and Pentecost Sunday (6/4), Youth/Confirmation Sunday (6/11), Outdoor Worship (6/18), and Racial Reconciliation Sunday (6/25) are all coming your way, so don't think Summer is a time to disconnect from your worship life, or your call to discipleship.

Liz Laughlin and her team will also have weekly activities for the children all summer long, in addition to hosting a Grace rummage sale in July.

**Pastor Daniel**

### Water Justice Conference at Grace

On May 13 Grace hosted a conference on water justice issues produced by Trinity Institute in New York. Our co-host was Faith in Place, an organization formed to empower Illinois people of all faiths to be leaders in caring for the Earth by providing resources to educate, connect, and advocate for healthier communities. Marilyn Mason, Mark Mathyer, Janet Wright, Clare Tallon Ruen and Anne Laurence joined people from other faith communities in a day-long examination of the universal need and right to clean water, how that right has been compromised, and what we can do about it.

We heard presentations from renowned leaders and scholars in environmental ethics, and we engaged in discussions about what our own faith communities can do locally and worldwide. Some issues raised in one of the videos we watched were the sea-level rise and its effect in Florida's coastal cities; that clean water is a human right and lack of water causes 81% of sickness. Also mentioned was that justice and water are closely linked, and that water is mentioned 722 times in the Bible. We were encouraged to live the "we", not the "me". It was pointed out that there is no substitute for water.

Another presenter pointed out the importance of output v. outcome, and whether interventions achieve long-term outcomes. An example was wells that are installed in areas where water is lacking, but no attention is usually paid to maintenance of those wells with the result that many of them have become inoperable. It makes sense that even though those of us with modern plumbing often need plumbers to repair our kitchen sinks and bathroom fixtures, yet we rarely recognize that more crude forms of water sources in third world countries would need ongoing maintenance as well.

Some water justice success factors were to change focus from outputs to outcomes; link water and sanitation and hygiene; there are multiple solutions to water problems; we need to understand the context and then make plans; build a local management capacity – teach the locals how to maintain the wells, as an example; support local management with government and business links; water justice is always local.

We also discussed water issues in the U.S. caused by aging pipes such as in Flint, Michigan, and that the community of Pembroke, Illinois has serious water problems where all residents need their own wells and sewage systems.

The day's activities spurred the Grace members there to resurrect a Grace Green Team, and we welcome anyone else to join us.



**Grace Graduates, 2017**



## Wonderful Wednesdays

Liz Laughlin, our education coordinator, has begun an inspired outreach ministry at Grace this spring! 'Wonderful Wednesdays' has only been happening for a few weeks, and already it's attracting more than 30 people every Wednesday from 5:30pm – 7:30pm.

For too long, Grace has been searching for an outreach vehicle to serve and get to know our neighbors. Wonderful Wednesdays, in addition to the positive spirit the Ice Cream Social has already engendered, ups the ante on pure, loving support for all of Grace's neighbors: A simple meal, time for adults to talk and connect, and fun activities for youth and children. It's so simple, yet so rewarding and, well...it just feels right.



Please speak with Liz if you have an interest in volunteering to help with Wonderful Wednesdays, and please: come! It is a time and space to be together, and to revel in the gift of our community both inside and outside of Grace!



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## Benevolence

Benevolence is defined as an act of kindness, a charitable gift, the desire to do good to others. In the context of our church, it is our efforts to reach out to those outside our congregation with the resources and talents we possess.

When we met in January to talk about our budget and ask people to consider their contributions to Grace, Benevolence was listed as a separate category to which money should be allocated. As of this writing, almost \$10,000 has been promised by members for 2017. This is a good start, but the needs are many and more is always needed.

Our congregation already commits itself to a promised contribution to the Metro-Chicago Synod which also filters some of that money to the church-wide body, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. Both of those bodies contribute to local, national, and global charities such as the World Hunger Campaign and Lutheran Social Services of Illinois. Grace's contributions to the Synod is budgeted within the context of our operating budget, not from our Benevolence fund.

### ***So, where will our Benevolence money go?***

Thinking local, national and global seems a good way to allocate our funds. In the past we have contributed to Bridges to Home, Interfaith Action of Evanston, Family Promise, Y.O.U., ELCA World Hunger, ELCA

national disaster appeals, LSSI, and individuals who needed our help. With your blessing, we will continue to contribute to organizations such as these.

This year, we would also like to introduce the concept of a "Pocket Fund". The title comes from the image of people reaching into their pockets when they hear of someone who needs help right then and there or when the Synod requests money for a special fund or sudden emergency. It might be that the Benevolence Fund doesn't have the money right then, so we need to ask people to reach into their pockets to help.

Please let us know what organizations you feel we should give to this year as well as any sudden needs that come up. We will keep you informed as funds are dispersed.

### ***Your Benevolence committee members are:***

Bob Carroll, chair  
Christine Collins  
Mark Mathyer  
Bob Shoaf  
Ginny Ayers

## Making History

Did you know that Grace is a part of making history in Evanston? This fall Grace, along with nine other Lutheran and Catholic congregations, will sign a covenant to work together and stand in unity with each other. All those old misconceptions of our differences are vanishing, and we are seeing each other as brothers and sisters in Christ and in God's work.

Since last summer a group of planners from different congregations has been planning and presenting events to help Lutherans and Catholics see our similarities. Reformation 500 and Beyond has sponsored discussions, presentations, study groups, and even fun events like Hymns and Hops to discover that we really aren't as different as we had once thought.

Representatives of the Evanston congregations have drafted a covenant pledging to work together as Christians to do God's work on Earth. Drafts of the covenant have been presented to leadership in each church to gather input and ultimately approval of the agreement.

On October 29, 2017 members of the 10 congregations will gather at Garrett Theological Seminary chapel to witness the signing of a covenant of the churches to work together, pray together, and stand in unity as God's people on earth. Mark that date on your calendar and plan to join us as we move into a new world of cooperation.

**Got questions? Contact Connie Wood**

## An Oasis in Evanston

Once a month for the past year, your donations to the Interfaith Hospitality Center have been delivered to the Center housed at St. Mark's Episcopal Church on Ridge Avenue. Over that past year Grace has financed \$9,100 to purchase groceries for the Interfaith Hospitality Center. That along with the grocery donations of the people of Grace has provided 60 gallons of milk, 96 boxes of crackers, 1152 waffles, 60 pounds of fruit, and a whole lot more.

The beneficiaries of your generosity are the 35-50 men and women who daily use the Hospitality Center for a warm breakfast, a place to clean up, job counseling and computer training, and a safe place off the streets. It truly has been an oasis for the neediest among us.

**God's Work Our Hands!**



## Logan's Confirmation Project

Animals and wildlife need your help. As stewards who keep and care for the earth, we can help pollinators to keep doing their job. But if people keep killing animals and pollinators with our pollution, we will have a serious problem.

I am Logan Spies and I love nature. My Confirmation project is to help our pollinators and our fellow wildlife creatures to grow and thrive in Evanston. If you are interested in donating, volunteering, or learning how to create a certified wildlife habitat in your garden, visit <http://greenerevanston.org/community-habitat-certification-program> or ask me about how to certify your garden as a wildlife refuge. I have information and can answer questions.

Thanks! I hope we can save our little wildlife friends and nature's bounty!

**Logan Spies**, 847.424.9137, or send me your email & I can forward information to you electronically: rcampbell@gmx.net

## Worship Feedback Team

Do you have ideas you would like to share about our worship on Sunday mornings? Maybe things you particularly find meaningful or not, or new ideas you would like to see us try?

We are forming a Worship Feedback Team which will meet twice a year (in June and January), and can also be convened for extraordinary circumstances. This group of 12 who make a 2-year commitment, will be chaired by Rachel Stark Inch and she will be the liaison to the congregation via the Harbinger and the Council. (Seasonal Task Forces for Advent and Lent and other celebrations as deemed important will continue to be organized by Pastor Ruen and Mark Bowman.) We are still recruiting a few more members, with the hope of having a composition of intercultural, intergenerational, LGBT and new/long-timer members.

The first meeting is scheduled for June 22nd, and if you would like to have your ideas expressed, please contact one of the members listed below. We prefer that your feedback not be anonymous.

Carmelo Alvarez	Rachel Stark Inch, <i>Chair</i>
Mark Bowman	Kaari Reiersen
Christine Collins	Raquel Rodriguez
Felipe Encarnacion	Pastor Daniel Ruen
Susan Graef	Sally Schleker
Bonnie Gunzenhauser	Youth ( <i>position to be filled</i> )

**Submitted by Rachel Stark Inch, 847-373-4587**

## Grace Landscaping and Garden

Foundation plants, including Korean Viburnum and plants for butterflies, were added to the front of Grace. The new sign landscaping is in progress and the raised garden beds have been planted!

Anyone who wants to join the fun with the Grace garden team please contact Clare Tallon Ruen or Holly O'Connor.



## COMMUNITY RENEWAL SOCIETY: Day of Faith at the Capitol, May 9, 2017

It was a cold, rainy morning when 17 Grace members met their bus at the Unitarian Church of Evanston on Ridge Ave at 6:00 AM. A few of the group were traveling with PD by car in order to get back in time for a meeting at the high school. After an hour of rest, coffee and donuts, our CRS staff member, Luis Carrizales, gave us our assignments to meet and persuade assigned state legislators to support our CRS agenda:

1. Support HB 2373: Expand Record Sealing Eligibility for people with nonviolent felonies in order to get jobs, education and housing.
2. Support HB 3202: Remove requirement of a sworn affidavit to file complaint about police misconduct.
3. Support SB 233: Gun Reduction Act to provide judicial discrimination to determine penalty for gun possession. More education and less incarceration are the goals.
4. Oppose SB 1722: Longer sentences for gun possession. This does not improve public safety.

Rev. Ann Rosewall of First Congregational Church of Evanston led our group of seven to visit and persuade seven legislators of the CRS agenda. Included in this group were: Bob Lamont, Bob Carroll, and Ginny Ayers. Missing this year due to illness was Gail Lamont who has always been a powerful voice for CRS.



This group succeeded in meeting with:

1. Rep. Robert Martwick (D) who endorsed some of the agenda items and promised to look into others. He blames only the governor for the failure to pass "The Grand Bargain" compromise budget.
2. Rep. Scott Drury (D) who said sealing the records was not effective because it doesn't "ban the box" on employment applications. The "box" is to be checked if the applicant has ever been convicted of a felony. He said he would look into the police misconduct bill and gun reduction act.

The other five legislators were either in committee, caucus or couldn't leave their respective house or senate sessions. We left packets of materials for them with their office staff.

While waiting "at the rail" for one of those five, Ginny happened to meet with Sen. Daniel Biss. She told him how excited our Grace youth were about their scheduled meeting later in the afternoon.

He apologized that he had to cancel due to an unavoidable conflict. She reminded him that these kids were his future voters.

The day concluded with a rally at the statue of Abraham Lincoln to celebrate two FORCE (Fighting to Overcome Records and Create Equality) members who have succeeded in finding good employment. As cold as it was in Evanston, it was really hot in Springfield at 2:30! Back on the bus to enjoy air conditioning and feel pleased with our work at the Capitol.





## Day of Faith in Springfield and Pride at Grace, 2017



# Grace

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