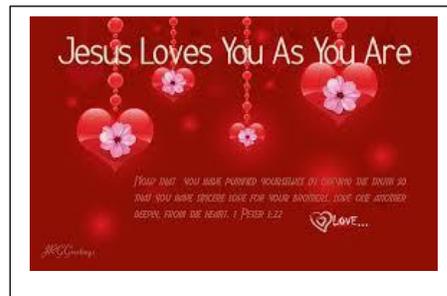


# + GRACENOTES +

February 2021



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK ... *LENT RICH*

Every year as Lent draws near, I recall the words of a cherished and sainted friend ... one of my seminary professors ... The Rev. Dr. George Hoyer. The words were a closing wish he had written in a note to me. Those gracious words are a phrase that I have used every Season of Lent since receiving them. The words read: "May you be Lent rich!"

That's not the way we generally look at Lent. We find Lent an austere time of reflection, repentance, fasting and prayer. We usually think of Lent as a time in which we "give something up." Rarely do we think of Lent being rich. Yet, that's what this holy season asks us to do ... reflect upon "Lenten riches."



Yes, thank God, Lent is approaching! With the solemnities of Ash Wednesday and The Imposition of Ashes, my spirit will come into its own. True, others may find their comfortable time in Christmas or Easter or the teaching time of the long Season of Pentecost, but my soul will come to rest with Lent. Other times of The Church's Year of Grace may tell me what I ought to be or what, by God's grace, I will be; but only Lent deals with what I am now ... whom I am ... and how I come to grips with that.

Contemporary psychiatry may tell me that the first and most important step in therapy is to face the dark spots in my life openly, realistically, and admit them. Lent has always known that.

Yes, thank God, I am Lent rich! For this is a time of great freedom and spiritual joy. It is in the Gospel news of my crucified and risen Lord that I learn not only to see myself as I really am, but that I'm freed from the need to deny and hate myself; freed from the need to base my salvation upon striving to be what I know I can never be. Being Lent rich, I do not need to struggle futilely to throw off the burden of my sin and guilt because they have already been thrown off. Jesus Christ takes my sin and guilt upon himself. He bears them willingly in his body to The Cross for me. He overcomes sin, the power of Satan, and death (the wages of sin) for me. By his death and resurrection He persuades me that God loves me and that I am a forgiven and reconciled child of God. Being Lent rich allows me to live my life as best I can in Christ within my limitations and sorrows, and that when I reach the breaking point, he holds me up and sees me through it by the power of the Spirit. Being Lent rich, he takes my hand in his wounded hand and in so doing adds something to my life ... the only ingredient it needs to come to wholeness ... real love ... HIS LOVE! Yes, I am truly Lent rich!

Continued blessing and peace to you as you approach this holy Season of Lent 2021.

May you be Lent rich!

Living in the richness of God's love,

+ *Pastor Jim*



**Grace Lutheran Ministry**  
**Financial Status**  
**January – December 2020**

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH  
 FINANCIAL PLAN STATUS                      Dec, 2020

Gen. Fund Plan vs Contributions	YTD THRU		2020 PLAN	
	Dec, 2020	DEC, 2020	% of PLAN	TOTAL
General Fund Contributions	\$13,535.00	\$161,278.12	100.21%	
Plan Offering Goal	\$13,411.81	\$160,941.70	100.00%	\$160,941.70
<hr/>				
Over (-under) Plan goal	\$123.19	\$336.42		
Contributions vs Expenditures				
General Fund Contributions	\$13,535.00	\$161,278.12	100.21%	\$160,941.70
General Fund expenditures	\$26,415.39	\$146,337.37	90.93%	
<hr/>				
Net	-\$12,880.39	\$14,940.75		

EXPENDITURE TOTALS INCLUDE \$15,000.00 TO CHARITY, APPROVED BY CHURCH COUNCIL.

Financial Giving Statements were mailed on January 21, 2021. Please look at the label on the correspondence and check for any corrections or updates. We are diligently updating our computer information for members at Grace. Please put a note in Barb Morlok's mailbox at church or send your updates to: [bjmorlok@gmail.com](mailto:bjmorlok@gmail.com). If you feel there is a discrepancy with your enclosed Offering Statement, call Barb at 541-778-3691. Thanks for your assistance. Have a happy and healthy 2021.

**Directory Updates:**

Ray Kistler – email address – [raymondk@kswarchitects.com](mailto:raymondk@kswarchitects.com)

Bonnie Schraub – 548 N. Main St. #210, Ashland, OR 97520

Lee Seater – 537 Timberlake Drive, Ashland, OR 97520 541-482-1853



## CONGREGATIONAL UPDATE

First of all, congratulations to Joe Borecki on his recent engagement to Marne Johnson-Rickard! We wish them every blessing and pray for their well-being as they begin new lives together. Joe has since sold his property in Medford, where he grew up and lived most of his life. He and Marne are buying a new home in north Medford. No word at this time on when the wedding will be.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Call Committee interviewed two potential pastoral candidates via Zoom during the week of Jan. 18. The Committee agreed that the interviews went very well and that both men seemed like good fits for Grace. We have followed up to let them know we would like to invite each of them to visit us at Grace at some point when they are able and pandemic conditions allow. We have since received word from one of the candidates that he has also received a Call from another congregation, which he must prayerfully consider first. Please continue to keep them, and the Call Process, in your prayers.

Interviews were also held for the position of Office Administrator. While Pat has been doing a wonderful job for the past two and a half years, she is doing double duty because of her primary role as Co-Chair of the Lay Ministry Board.

\*\*\*\*\*

Please continue to pray for, and support, the on-going relief efforts for the thousands of people affected by the Alameda Fire. There are still hundreds of households living in motels because of the lack of other housing. The massive cleanup effort that is underway in Talent and Phoenix has been in the local news a lot lately. Let's not forget the folks that are still doing without.

It was reported at the last Council meeting that congregational 'giving' for 2020 slightly exceeded the budget goal for the year. In addition, another \$46,650 in monetary donations were given for eight special projects (sound system, Alameda Fire fund, Africa Mission, etc.), and \$1,400 toward the designated Music Fund. Thank you all for your continued tithing and offering contributions that allow Grace to continue to preach and share the gospel in our community.

Heads-up: 2021 is already one month old and the Lenten Season begins in less than 3 weeks...Ash Wednesday is Feb.17. Palm Sunday is March 28, followed by Easter on April 4. More details on plans for worship services will be forthcoming in future emails.

Bob Janssen,  
Council President

**Letter of Thanks for Financial Gift Received from  
Rogue Valley Habitat for Humanity**

Dear Grace Lutheran Church

My name is Larry Jung and I am a retired Presbyterian pastor. I have served on the Apostle's Build team of our local Habitat chapter since 2008 and currently chairing the team. The Apostle's Build team consists of representatives from local churches which contribute money and labor to build homes for qualified applicants. On behalf of Habitat and our Apostle's build team, I want to thank Grace Lutheran church for your generous donation to our work of building homes. I would also like to invite you to participate on our Apostle's Build team. If one of your church members would like to participate, simply let me know by responding to my email address [larryjungepc@gmail.com](mailto:larryjungepc@gmail.com). We meet monthly, the first Wednesday of the month at noon. Since the Covid pandemic, we have been meeting on Zoom, with the Executive Director, Denise James leading our meetings. In the past, we met at the Administration office on North Pacific Highway in Medford. The meeting lasts an hour and includes lunch. We are working on house #73 which will be built on Mellecker Street in Medford. Habitat has asked the local churches to do this entire build. So, your congregation members are needed! Thanks again for thinking of Habitat with your generous gift.

In Christ, Larry Jung

## THE TIME of EASTER

### LENT

The time of Easter invites us into the story of Jesus' sacrificial death and his glorious resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus gives proof that our salvation has been completed and that our hope for eternal life with God is secure.

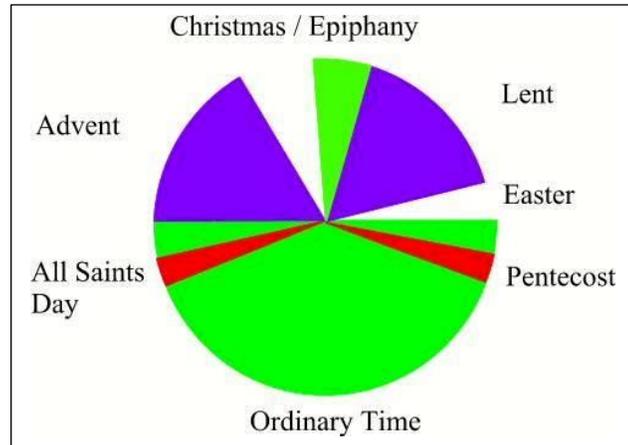
Easter was the major celebration of The Early Church, which also set aside a period of preparation to celebrate The Resurrection of Our Lord (Easter).

Lent was a period of preparation first prescribed for baptismal candidates. During this period, the candidates were examined in preparation for Baptism at the Easter (Paschal) Vigil. Later, these forty days were associated with Jesus' forty days in the desert prior to his temptation (Matthew 4:1-11) and with the forty years the children of Israel spent in the wilderness (Numbers 14:34), becoming a period of preparation for every Christian.

The Sundays during this season are not "of Lent" but "in Lent." Thus, the Sundays in Lent retain an Easter tone emphasizing the Gospel of Christ as central even to this penitential season. As we prepare our hearts and minds to receive our crucified and risen Lord, the catholic churches of the Western Tradition observe a number of Lenten practices and traditions ...

The church is decorated in violet, the color of royalty and repentance. This period of repentance is marked by a purposeful turning away from our sin and turning toward Christ for his mercy and forgiveness.

- Ash Wednesday begins the observance of Lent. Ashes on the forehead are a sign of penitence and a reminder that we, too, shall die and therefore need forgiveness from Jesus.
- Alleluia is the Hebrew word for "Praise the Lord." It is a joyous expression of faith in God. During Lent, we forego using this joyous response in order to focus on our need for repentance and faith.
- As in Advent, we do not sing the Gloria in Excelsis. We do this to focus our worship on repentance.
- Fasting, prayer, and almsgiving are the three traditional habits of Lent focusing on "giving something up" (fasting) and "adding something" (prayer and almsgiving) to one's spiritual life and service during Lent.



## From Your Valentine

St. Valentine was a priest who was executed around 270 A.D. There are many things we don't know about this martyr, but there are numerous, sometimes conflicting, stories about his life and death. One says that he was slain for performing weddings in secret after the Roman Emperor Claudius II had outlawed Christian weddings. Another legend says it was because he helped Christians escape from brutal Roman prisons.



In 498 A. D., just over 200 years after Valentine's execution, Pope Gelasius declared February 14 as St. Valentine's Day. Valentine's love for God and humanity has made him "the patron saint of love" in the Roman Catholic Church and for people around the world.

By the mid-1700's, it was common practice for friends and sweethearts to exchange trinkets made in the shape of hearts or to send handwritten notes of affection on February 14<sup>th</sup>. It's believed that Valentine himself sent the first "valentine" while imprisoned. He is said to have written a letter to a young girl who visited him in prison just before his death. He signed the letter, "From your Valentine," a sentiment still used today.



## Homelessness and It's Cause

When we see people struggling with addiction or suffering a mental health crisis, it is helpful to lean in a little closer to examine the causes.

As human beings we tend to accept a simple, black and white response to things that are complex and difficult to understand. We who are housed (especially me) like to keep a safe distance from my more vulnerable state of uncertainty of what I am called to do about the suffering in the American crisis of homelessness.

Through serving at the Food Bank, the ORHA winter shelter and the free meals program, we notice that people on the streets have survived exceedingly sad lives of pain and trauma. According to street centered research conducted by Alan Graham, author of [Welcome Home\(less\)](#), we learn: *The single greatest cause of homelessness is a profound, catastrophic loss of family.*

Beneath the addiction, mental illness, prostitution and self-destructive behaviors is a profound, catastrophic loss of family. I notice the staff at the Food Bank, the Shelter and the Monday Meals seem to incorporate grace, respect and admiration for their grit and their worth and ability to persevere.

According to author, Alan Graham, the antidote for the profound loss of family is the creation of community. A sense of community includes the elements of a safe place to live, fellowship and case management so clients can contribute to the common good AND a necessary sense of hope. We at Grace offer that sense of profound hope for all in our community.

**By Nan Gunderson**



**Women of Grace Newsletter  
February 2021**

**Mission Sunday**

Thank you to all of you who are donating to our mission efforts on the **3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month**. Next month I will give an update on **MITES donations**. Inasmuch as we can no longer have fundraising bake sales to fund our Advent donations, we suggest that one might make a check to the LWML memo “missions” for what one might have donated for baked goods in the past. Last year we were able to give out \$1,400.00 in Advent donations to local faith-based charities.

**Mary Martha Circle LWML**

Mary Martha Circle aka Women of Grace LWML will continue to meet on the **3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 1:00 PM**. **All women are welcome**. We will continue to discuss how we might continue our local mission efforts during this time of lock down restrictions.

**Women’s Bible Study**

We will be finishing-up with our study of 1 Corinthians this month. In chapter 15 Paul discusses the resurrection of Christ, and our blessings as we, too, are promised a spiritual body upon our earthly death. Paul concludes in chapter 16 with an appeal to help the church in Jerusalem. We will then embark upon 2 Corinthians for the remainder of the Spring. Our group has averaged about eight in attendance each Tuesday morning at 10:00 AM in the sanctuary. Please feel free to join us.

**Mites at Work!  
OR District LWML**

**Equipping People with Intellectual and Developmental  
Disabilities to Sing, Tell, Declare His Marvelous Deeds**

For three years, **Bethesda Lutheran Communities** in the **Portland, OR & Renton, WA** areas, have been sharing God’s love to those intellectually and developmentally disabled (DD). Mona Fuerstenau, Bethesda’s Director of Partnership Ministries, adapted resources giving leadership training, mentoring, and the opportunity for people with DD to share their stories and their love of Jesus with people of all venues—from one-on-one to those gathered at conferences and conventions. This grant of **\$6,500.00** will allow for program expansion by covering the cost of the training sessions so Mrs. Fuerstenau can travel to meet at least once with the Bethesda people in and under the supervision of pastors. These funds will help cover the cost of a two-week intensive training for up to 10 students, including their travel, meals, tuition, airfares and related costs for the instructor.

*“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” 1 Corinthians 15:38 (NKJV)*



## TO YOUR HEALTH

**“Watch over your heart with al diligence, for from it flows the springs of life.”**

**Proverbs. 4:23**

Since February is American Heart Month, we'll be focusing on Heart Disease/Attack for this month's topic. Heart disease is still a leading cause of death in our country. Each year many Americans experience a heart attack. Years ago, a heart attack was often fatal. But today, thanks to better awareness of symptoms and improved treatments, the vast majority of people who have heart attacks survive.

A heart attack is an injury to your heart muscle from loss of blood supply. It usually occurs when a blood clot blocks the flow of blood through arteries serving regions of your heart. Interrupted blood flow to your heart can damage or destroy part of the heart muscle. It can also be fatal.

Warning signs of a heart attack include: Pressure, fullness of a squeezing pain in the chest, pain extending to the jaw, left arm or shoulder, prolonged pain in the upper abdomen, shortness of breath, sweating, nausea and vomiting, fainting, unsteadiness or confusion.

Of the people who die of heart attacks, most die within the first hour after the onset of symptoms. **Don't waste time** thinking your symptoms are a false alarm. Seek emergency medical treatment immediately. Treatments can be started by emergency medical teams, and the sooner you get to a hospital, the more that can be done to limit the amount of damage done to your heart during a heart attack. Fast action may save your life or that of your loved one!

It's never too late to take steps to prevent a heart attack – even if you've already had one. Drug therapy has become an increasingly important part of reducing the risk of a second heart attack and helping a damaged heart function better. Lifestyle factors also play a critical role in heart attack prevention and recovery.

Taking the following steps can help you not only prevent but recover from a heart attack: Get regular checkups; control your blood pressure; check your cholesterol; don't smoke or quit smoking; exercise regularly; maintain a healthy weight; eat healthy; manage stress; and consume alcohol in moderation. Ask your physician about medications that help heart function more effectively or reduce the risk of heart attack.

Information for this topic was taken from the American Heart Association. More information can be reached at their website: <https://www.heart.org>



*The Word From The Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty.*

**NOW IS THE TIME FOR FAITH! Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz**

<sup>14</sup> After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. <sup>15</sup> “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

In a Charlie Brown cartoon, little brother Linus is looking very forlorn. He asks big sister Lucy, “Why are you always so anxious to criticize me?” Lucy, looking very self-righteous, replies, “I just think I have a knack for seeing other people’s faults.” Linus turns indignant. “What about your own faults?” he asks. “I have a knack for overlooking them,” says Lucy.

I think Lucy’s attitude is an endemic condition of the sinful human heart. What do you think? Be honest now. It is so easy to see the faults and sins of others, while virtually ignoring the enormous brokenness within ourselves. Human beings tend to judge themselves by their intentions, while judging others by their actions. We have a natural tendency to learn to live with our pet sins, while becoming extremely irritated and put off by the sins and weaknesses of others. Sin ravages our relationship with God, it devastates our relationships with others, and it destroys a healthy sense of ourselves. The Bible is clear, “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). No cryogenic freezing, no DNA tinkering, and no long-term health program is going to reverse what starts in our rebellious hearts.

Now is the time to realize the sobering news that God can’t and won’t overlook our sin. He’s holy; He cannot abide with sin. But He loves us and doesn’t wish for us to be ravaged eternally by our sin. Now is also the time to hear the even better news that God, out of love, has done something about our sinful, human condition. The good news is that, while “the wages of sin is death, ...the gracious gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

The Gospel of Mark gets right to the point, doesn’t it? Of course, Jesus had to be born. But Mark doesn’t spend time retelling the birth of Jesus. Mark doesn’t even take time to talk about the early years of Jesus’ life. What matters in his account is the public ministry of this Jesus.

What matters is that He has come to deal with the universal problem of the fallen human race. He has come to deal with our sin and the impending judgment of God. He has come to save.

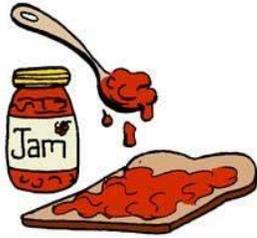
That's why the message of today's reading remains as simple *and* multifaceted as, "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

Don't be a "Lucy" who misses out on the good news of Jesus because you're too busy telling yourself that you are just fine the way you are. On the other hand, don't miss out on the good news because you think that you are too much of a lost cause for Jesus either. Jesus came for you, sins and all, to give you His gracious gift of forgiveness, life, and salvation. The question isn't whether you are too terrible a sinner for His grace. The question is, "Is His grace powerful and all-encompassing enough to include you?" The answer is a resounding, "Yes!"

Sometimes we look in all the wrong places for healing from our brokenness. We look to self-help gurus, to smooth talking politicians, and even to athletic or societal "heroes." Ironically, even as believers, we tend to underestimate what Christ has done and can do for us. I'm sure those first disciples had a hard time thinking that Jesus could do anything and everything, especially the really big things. I know that they would see Him still the storm, feed the hungry, and heal those with diseases. I know that they would see glimpses of His greatness. But then they would also see Jesus tired, hungry, and worn out on occasions. Eventually, they would even be confronted with Jesus willingly hanging on a cross, giving up His life for us. Little did they understand that the person dead on a cross was the almighty and eternal Son of God. But they would soon realize that Jesus of Nazareth, *risen from the dead*, was indeed the eternal Word of God who created the heavens and the earth, and who become flesh for us and for our salvation (see John 1:1-3, 14).

Jesus Himself calls you this very day to "repent and believe the good news!" Repent means "to turn around from the direction you are going." Turn from living life on your terms, on those "Lucy" terms. Instead, be honest with yourself and open your eyes to this messiah named Jesus. Now is the time to believe in HIS good news for you, to put your trust for now and forever in the one who has come all the way from heaven to earth to be your Lord and Savior.

PRAYER: Dear Lord Jesus, let Your simple invitation to repent and believe in You move us to confident trust in You for our very lives, today and always! AMEN.



### LOVING KINDNESS

A Sunday School teacher asked her class, "What do you think the Bible means when it speaks of loving kindness?"

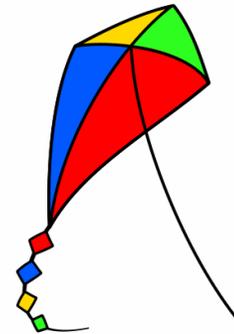
"Well," answered a little boy, "if I was hungry and someone gave me bread with butter on it, that would be kindness. And if they put jam on it, that would be loving kindness."

### GOD'S TUG ON US

An old man saw a child holding on to a piece of string that went high up into the sky. "Son," he asked, "why are you holding that string? The kite is out of sight?"

The boy answered, "I know it's there. I can feel the tug of it."

That's how we know God is active in our lives. We can feel his tug on us.



## February Birthdays



4	Lyle Hinrichs
15	Keith Kleinedler
17	Darryl Meierhoff
18	Vernia Sommerlot
22	Mike Schilling
26	Barbara Knox
28	Penny Henry

## February Wedding Anniversaries



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# Those Who Serve in February

## Lay Ministers

February 7 Shirley Westerberg  
February 14 Pat Meierhoff  
February 17 Ray Kistler (Ash Wed)  
February 21 Shirley Westerberg  
February 28 Pat Meierhoff

## Lay Readers

February 7 Judy Rupp  
Mike Bahr  
February 14 Nan Gunderson  
Mike Neely  
February 21 Ruth Luce  
Kristel Olsen  
February 28 Sandra Hinrichs  
Nancy Casazza

## Sound System

John Gisclon

## Zoom Host

Bob Janssen



# February 2021



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 10:00 am Women's Study 4:00 pm Lay Ministry	3	4	5	6
7 <b>Epiphany 5</b> 10:00 am Worship 11:00 am Fellowship	8 9:00 am Circuit Pastors' Mtg.	9 10:00 am Women's Study	10	11	12	13 8:00 am NO Men's Breakfast Study
14 <b>Transfiguration</b> 10:00 am Worship 	15	16 10:00 am Women's Study 12:00 pm LWML 6:30 pm Council	17 <b>Ash Wednesday</b> Walk-up Ashes and Communion Noon-12:30 pm Imposition of Ashes 7:00 pm Communion	18 	19	20
21 <b>1st Sunday in Lent</b> 10:00 am Worship 11:00 am Fellowship	22 	23 10:00 am Women's Study	24	25	26	27
28 <b>2nd Sunday in Lent</b> 10:00 am Worship 11:00 am Fellowship						

## **“Looking to the Future with Hope”**

**Grace Lutheran Church**

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**Ashland, OR. 97520**

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**LIKE us on Facebook – Grace Lutheran Ashland -LCMS**

**2021 ..... Peace, Love, Joy and Hope**

**“Grace Guides and Sustains”**