

THE VOICE OF GRACE

JANUARY 2017

WWW.GRACE43081.ORG



Dr. David Wendel Preaches at Grace

The Rev. Dr. David M. Wendel, Assistant to the Bishop of the North American Lutheran Church, gave the sermon at Grace on Dec. 4, 2016.

Dr. Wendel's home church is First Lutheran Church, Columbus, Indiana. He graduated from Indiana University and is a 1981 graduate of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. He earned his Doctorate of Ministry in Preaching from the Association of Chicago Theological Schools in 2001. He was called to be the Assistant to NALC Bishop John Bradosky and relocated to Columbus in 2012. In his current position, he assists congregations and pastors in the call process, serves as ecumenical officer, and assists the bishop as needed.

Pictured at left is Dr. Wendel at the pulpit, delivering a certificate of NALC membership to Grace President Randy Stoll, and greeting Nancy and John Kleberg after the Service.



Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

100 East Schrock Road, Westerville, OH 43081

(614) 882-3026 www.grace43081.org

e-mail: office@grace43081.org

Facebook:

facebook.com/GraceEvangelicalLutheranWesterville

website: www.grace43081.org

Holy Communion

EVERY Sunday Morning

Two Worship Services: 8:15 and 11:00 a.m.

Sunday School

for children, youth and adults 9:45 a.m.

*Join us for fellowship and refreshments
after each service.*

Vision Statement

We envision Grace to be a welcoming Christ-centered community of faith, inviting all, growing in discipleship, sharing in ministries.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to reach out with the love of Jesus to grow disciples and serve our community.



PASTOR'S MESSAGE



Pastor
William Hartfelder

*Dear Sisters and Brothers
in Christ.*

It's a story about a farm boy afraid of the dark. One night the boy's Dad told him to go to the barn to feed the horses. The boy blanched with fear at the thought of stepping into the dark that separated the house from the barn. Taking his

son out onto the porch, the Dad lit a lantern, held it high and asked, "Son, how far can you see?"

"I can see halfway to the barn," the boy told his Dad. His Dad gave him the lantern and said, "Walk halfway to the barn." When the boy was halfway, his Dad called out, "How far can you see now?" The boy yelled back, "I can see the barn." "Good," shouted the Dad, "walk to the barn door." When the boy called back that he was at the barn door, his Dad yelled, "Open it and tell me what you see." The boy opened the door and said in a loud voice, "I can see the horses!" "Good," said the Dad, "now feed them."

Many people, including Christians, mistakenly believe Christmas ends at midnight December 25th. However, we Lutheran Christians are among Christians who celebrate Christmas not only for a day, but also for a season. We began preparing for Christmas during the season of Advent. Christmas continues through

the day of Epiphany (a Greek word meaning 'to show' or 'make known/reveal') on January 6th. The season of Epiphany continues until Ash Wednesday (March 1st) when we begin the season of Lent. Epiphany lifts up the mission of the church to the world in the light of the Nativity.

Let's face it. There's plenty of evidence that the world can be a dark and scary place. Like the farm boy afraid of the dark, we feel much safer staying inside. The good news is God knows our fear. But rather than scolding us and shoving us out into the dark, our loving, forgiving God provides us with seasons of the Son, the Word made flesh and blood to dwell among us and the light no darkness can overcome. Why does God do such a thing?

**"Good ...
now
feed
them."**

First, it is the very nature of God to create light and life. God is light and life. Second, it is the very nature of God to provide us with what we need to be faithful. God is faithful and all we need. And third, it is the very nature of God to have great expectations of us for God has created us in God's

own image.

The year 2017 promises to be a year overflowing with challenges and opportunities for mission and ministry on our journey together as God's people called Grace. Like the farm boy afraid of the dark, we may be reluctant to venture outside. But we need not be afraid. The light of Christ is our guide so we may obey our Lord's command, "Feed my sheep" (John 21:17).

With you in the light of Christ.

Pastor Will

**Welcome
to
Grace**

John and Kirsten Hicks, Grace's "Welcome to Grace" shepherds, have announced that the next "Welcome to Grace" sessions will be on the Sunday afternoons of February 12 & 19 with reception of new members on Sunday February 26th.

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

Mission Statement

Our mission is to reach out with the love of Jesus to grow disciples and serve our community.



Vision Statement

We vision Grace to be a welcoming Christ-centered community of faith, inviting all, growing in discipleship, sharing in ministries.

Christmas Cantata

During the 8:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service the **Voices of Grace** presented the cantata "He Is Born," accompanied by a String Quartet and piano. Included in the service was a suite of carols arranged by Chris Hoch.



A Joyful Noise!

Concert Schedule

2017

January 15 7:00 p.m.

Singing Buckeyes

February 12 7:00 p.m.

Otterbein String Orchestra

March 19 7:00 p.m.

Bohemian Highway

May 7 7:00 p.m.

Dr. Tony's Original Ragtime Band

All Concerts are held in the Worship Space. A reception in the Gathering Space follows each event.

There is no admission charge for *A Joyful Noise!* concerts

A free will offering is taken.



Thank you Joel Mathias.

Interim Director of Music, Joel A. Mathias has been filling in for Grace's Director of Music Lora Moore while she recuperates from ankle surgery. We appreciate Joel's willingness to step in and help, especially at this time of year.

He is a graduate of Otterbein College where he earned a degree of Bachelor of Music Education.

Following four years of teaching in Ohio he and his wife Sandra moved to Bloomington, Indiana to pursue the Master of Music Degree in Choral Conducting, then stayed to teach at Bloomington High School South for seven years. In 1975 they returned to Columbus to direct the choirs at Bexley High School and to become the Director of Music at Broad Street Presbyterian Church downtown. Retirement from Broad Street has allowed Joel the pleasure of doing interim assignments at North Community Lutheran Church with organist Dennis Crill and at Boulevard Presbyterian Church in Grandview Heights. Joel said that he was honored to be asked to fill in for his colleague and friend Lora Moore following her surgery.

‘Honor the Lord with your substance and the first fruits of all your produce.’ (Proverbs 3:9)

Financial Manager Kathy Wahlenmaier reported that between November 7 and December 6, **\$700.00** was contributed by Grace members to W.A.R.M. (plus an additional \$320.00 designated for Thanksgiving) bringing the total for the year to **\$10,806.57**. A total of \$1,517.00 was donated to W.A.R.M. for Thanksgiving in the last two months.

In addition to the November funds, 169 pounds of food and hygiene items was donated.

Thanks to all who are making W.A.R.M. a regular part of your tithes and offerings. You are a blessing to many.

FIRST FRUITS VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Volunteering for the First Fruits Ministry involves one first Sunday of the Month at either the first or second worship service. Information and a sign-up sheet is at the Welcome Center. If you have questions call Karen Bale at 614-506-3331.

Cut out and collect these items for the January First Fruits Grocery Cart

NOTE:
Checks should be made out to Grace Lutheran Church with a notation on the memo line for W.A.R.M.

Ketchup, Mayonnaise, Saltines, Rotini or Penne Pasta,
Canned Peaches and Pears, and personal care items.
Fresh fruit is always welcome, especially early in the week.

Remember to place only non-perisable items into our grocery carts.

Go on-line to Westerville Area Resource Ministry to find the most needed items in addition to those listed above.



Salvation Army

Angel Tree

Check out the donations (pictured at the right) to WARM from children who attend Little Blessings preschool! Thanks for the generosity of these Little Blessings children and their families who donated 130 lbs. of diapers! Very much needed, very much appreciated.



Thank You!

Thanks also to all who purchased gifts for the *Angel Tree* this year. Our Social Concerns Committee, the Salvation Army, and many local youngsters are very appreciative of your thoughtfulness. The Christmas Spirit certainly is alive and well at Grace Lutheran, Westerville.



Grace's
Gang
Messages
from Molly



Molly King
Director of Youth and Family Ministries



Are you ready for some Football Soup?

For the month of January we will be collecting cans of soup. Leading up to the Super Bowl, we will be having our own Soup-er Bowl competition.

This competition will be the adults against the children. There will be two tubs clearly marked by the Welcome Table to put the cans in.

All the soup cans will be given to WARM at the end of the competition. **The last day to donate soup cans will be on Super Bowl Sunday.**

Let the competition begin! There may be a treat for the winner!

Molly King
Director of Youth and Family Ministry



ADULT LEARNING
"That the World May Know"

Volume 8 of the "That the World May Know" series began November 20. It is entitled: *God Heard Their Cry - Finding Freedom in the Midst of Life's Trials.*

In ancient times nothing was bigger than Egypt - powerful pharaohs, strong armies and a multitude of gods. In Volume 8 we discover how God answers this cry of his persecuted people and proclaims himself Lord to them and their oppressors.

Filmed on location in Luxor, Egypt; Deir al Medina, Ramesseum and at the Red Sea.

Noted teacher and historian Ray Vander Laan helps illustrate how God answered the cry of the Israelites.

The class meets at 9:45 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall and is facilitated by Bill Kulju. You are invited to join this class during the Sunday School hour - 9:45 - 10:45.



Journey Through the Land of the Bible: Israel and Jordan (Petra)

Pr. Will is leading another trip in late May of 2017! This is your opportunity to join him in the pilgrimage-vacation to remember for a lifetime! Make the Bible come alive as you explore the meeting place of "the three great monotheisms," Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Walk in the footsteps of the prophets, the kings of Israel, Jesus and the apostles. Space is limited. Your \$300.00 deposit will reserve your place. An information flyer is available at the Welcome Desk in the Gathering Space. For more information please contact Pr. Will (w.hartfelder@grace43081.org or phone 614-882-3026).



VIEW OF THE TEMPLE MOUNT FROM THE MT. OF OLIVES

Grace Youth

?

Grace Adults

?



Sunday School lessons for January

Preschool – The wise men visit Jesus, Jesus’ baptism, Jesus’ jobs, Jesus calls his disciples

Kindergarten/1st grade – The wise men visit, Baptism of Jesus, Jesus chooses his disciples, Feeding the 5,000

2nd/3rd grade – Jesus, the early years; John and Jesus; Calling the 12 disciples; Jesus’ first miracle

4th/5th grade – The Bible, Books of the Bible, Jesus: the first 30 years, Jesus calls his 12

6th/7th/8th grade – series on the books of the Bible

High school/college – continuation of the series ‘Shocking & Scandalous Stories from the Bible’

RUTH CIRCLE

Ruth Circle members will resume their Bible Study meetings on Monday, January 9th at 1:00. The meeting will be in the ‘Loaves and Fishes Cafe’ at Grace. Dorotha Fuhrman will be the study leader (lesson 4) and Verna Kreachbaum will serve as hostess. All women of Grace and their friends are welcome to attend.



-Dorotha Fuhrman



Wednesday Bible Study to resume January 11, 2017

The Women’s Wednesday Bible study will not meet on January 4 but will resume on January 11 with a study of Saint Peter.

Saint Peter: Flawed, Forgiven, and Faithful is the new Bible Study that will usher in the New Year beginning on Wednesday, January 11, 2017. Women of Grace and thier friends are invited to walk with Peter as he travels with Jesus from Galilee to Rome. Peter, who made more than one major mistake while following Jesus, has been highly revered within the Church since the days when Jesus walked with the disciples. The study of his life teaches us that when flawed people experience forgiveness through Jesus, they are freed and empowered to be faithful followers of Christ.

Meet in the Fellowship Hall Wednesday mornings at 10 o’clock. Facilitator will be Pastor Walston.

QR Code for Website

This is the QR (Quick Response) code for Grace. Scan this code with your iphone and it will take you directly to the Grace Lutheran Website.



As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. Gal. 1:9

Katharine Circle
Tuesday, January 3
7:15 p.m.

Juanita Martin will lead the lesson on
Christian Faith and Freedom
‘No Other Gospel’
 taken from the ELCA Gather Magazine.

Next Meeting
Feb. 7

“We’re so glad you asked.....”

a column offering a response to questions and concerns on a variety of topics. If you have a question, please put it in writing and deliver it to the Church Office or email it to: office@grace43081.org. Questions must be signed.

Question: Is applause appropriate during worship?

This is a generational question. Chances are if you’re a “cradle Lutheran” Christian you were either explicitly taught or you simply learned by example that applause is not part of “a Lutheran way” of worship. A common explanation was that applause belongs to the world of entertainment and since worship is not entertainment applause is not appropriate in church.

Times change. For example, there was a time when all agreed it was inappropriate for women to wear slacks to church or have their heads uncovered in worship. There was a time men would never come to worship without jacket, shirt and tie.



The same may be said of applause in church. We live in an age in which applause now serves as an expression of joy as well as a way of saying thank you. Thus, for example, nowadays applause may indeed be appropriate during worship as an expression of thanksgiving and joy in response to a musical offering that has touched hearts and enriched our worship of God.

***“O come, let us sing to the LORD;
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of
our salvation!***

***Let us come into his presence with
thanksgiving;
let us make a joyful noise to him with
songs of praise!”***

(Psalm 95:1-2)

Annual Meeting of Altar Guild

The Grace Altar Guild will hold its annual meeting on Saturday, February 18, 2017. It will begin at 10:00 a.m. and end at approximately 11:30 a.m.



The agenda includes discussing the past year and making plans for the new year. All members are urged to attend - along with anyone who may have an interest in joining the Altar Guild.

The annual meeting is a great time to fellowship with other guild members and meet new people you may not know.

Questions: Call Rachel Gangestad (614-895-0138), or Carolyn Gibboney (614-891-9374).

We look forward to the meeting and another great year with Grace Altar Guild.

Westerville Habitat Partnership says Thank you to Grace Lutheran for another successful Progressive Christmas Concert and Soup for Shelter event which was on Friday, December 9. We earned over \$9000 which will more than pay for the Wall Build for a 2017 home! Thank you to all of you who sang, played, donated time and effort, or attended these events!



See you next year!

*-Joanne Figge,
Chairman WHP
2016*



**The
Supper
Club**

January 19th - 6:30 PM
Polaris Grill
1835 Polaris Parkway

Sign up sheet at Hospitality Desk

Men of Grace (MOG)

The Men of Grace meet the third Saturday morning of every month - October through May - at 8 a.m.

The Lesson Theme this year is:

“AHA - Awakening - Honest - Action.”

The session on **Saturday, January 21** will be led by Bill Kulju. All male members of Grace, high school age and up, are ‘Men of Grace’ and are invited to attend for breakfast, fellowship and spiritual growth.

AHA! See you on **the 21st.**

**Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church
Church Council Meeting
December 3, 2016
Vision, Policy, and Budget**

Council Members: Randy Stoll (President), Jeff Brenning (Vice President) John Hicks (Treasurer), Joanne Figge (Secretary), Senior Pastor Will Hartfelder, Members at Large:, Bill Kulju, Lisa Kuhar, Shirley Moleno and Vanessa Stewart. Jeff Brenning was absent.

Call meeting to order: Randy Stoll called the meeting to order at 7:18 pm after a delicious pot luck dinner at Pastor Will and Julie Hartfelder's home.

Devotions: Pastor Will led devotions and read Matthew 1:18-25, about Joseph, son of David, and the birth of Jesus. He also read a Christmas story to council.

Approval of November's meetings' minutes: The November meeting, Special Meeting, and Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes were reviewed. Bill Kulju moved to accept the minutes and Shirley Moleno seconded it. *Motion passed unanimously.*

Topic 1: The retention process of meeting minutes and church archival records were discussed and a new process will be implemented in the new year.

Topic 2: Nominations of a slate of candidates for council office were nominated and discussed.

The motion was by John Hicks, and seconded by Lisa Kuhar. Council officers for the year 2017 are: Randy Stoll, President, John Hicks, Treasurer, Shirley Moleno, Vice President, and Joanne Figge, Secretary.

Topic 3: WNALC. Women of the North American Lutheran Church membership was discussed and approved for financial assistance to pay membership fees. A plan was put into place to invite a representative of WNALC to visit with women of our congregation who attend Wednesday morning Women's Bible Study. *(Ed.Note: See page 11)*

Topic 4: Youth and Family Ministry and Group. Molly King has received information about the Outcome-based ministry certification process. (OBMC). It is a 12 to 14 step plan of intentional action. She has plans for 2017 that include a confirmation camp,; Camp Luther; Vacation Bible School, a possible new Sunday school program, and a youth mission outreach in the summer. Molly will come to our council meeting in January to present her plans.

Topic 5: Little Blessing's plans are set for the year 2017. There will be an intentional outreach to enroll additional students for the 2017-2018 academic year.

Topic 6: Joyful Noise has a Scioto Brass concert this Sunday evening. Fred Pfanz will introduce the concert in Lora's absence. To date this year the income received from the concerts has decreased compared to



2017 Church Council: L to R: Bill Kulju, Treasurer John Hicks, Vanessa Stewart, Jeff Brenning, President Randy Stoll, Vice President Shirley Moleno, Secretary Joanne Figge, Lisa Kuhar.

previous years. Fred Pfanz will do the "ask" for voluntary donations at Sunday's Scioto Brass event.

Topic 7: Council Retreat will be April 21 and 22. The topic will be the futuring of our church. Council will meet with mission committee chairs to discuss their struggles and/or needs prior to the retreat.

Topic 8: Security in the church was discussed. After receiving assessments from security experts (including John Kleberg) and Westerville police and fire, council has proposals for cameras and security to discuss at next month's meeting.

Topic 9: The monthly statistical report was sent to council by email and approved at this meeting

Topic 10: The call process for pastoral assistance as well as an office manager was discussed. Grace's personnel committee has approved the position of manager and the payment schedule for it. The position will be posted to various job sites and discussed with other churches' personnel for prospect leads.

Topic 11: Treasurer's November 2016 report was reviewed: After presentation of the budget which shows a surplus of income this year, Lisa Kuhar moved for a 5% (\$9000) bonus pool to give to the personnel committee to bonus employees of Grace at year's end. Bill Kulju seconded the motion. *Council approved unanimously.*

- **Forward in Faith, Forward in Hope** stewardship program has reached 50% of its income.

- The Columbarium had a small expense for an annual license fee.

- This month's value of Grace's investment funds is \$1,366,387. Bill Kulju moved to accept the Treasurer's report; Lisa Kuhar seconded. *The report was accepted unanimously.*

Pastor Will closed the meeting with another devotion about Joseph and a prayer.

Next month's council meeting will be Jan. 12, 7 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Joanne Figge, Council Secretary



We are a congregation of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC).

The NALC embraces four core values: Christ Centered, Mission Driven, Traditionally Grounded and Congregationally Focused.

The NALC is focused on living out Christ's Great Commission to go and make disciples in North America and around the globe.

We invite you to learn more about our congregation and the NALC.



Grace Lutheran Church and the American Red Cross are hosting an upcoming blood drive.

Please join our lifesaving mission and schedule an appointment today!

Date: Tue Jan 10, 2017 Time: 12:00 PM - 6:00: PM

Is there a better way to start off the new year than to help save a life and also a great New Year's resolution as well! Hey - we all talk about giving up coffee or losing a few pounds for the new year but saving lives by becoming a regular donor at all of our drives this year is a tremendous resolution to start!

The American Red Cross urges people to share their good health this year and resolve to give blood regularly, beginning in January with National Blood Donor Month, won't you?

You may sign up on line by going to redcrossblood.org and looking up the date of January 10th at Grace Lutheran Church and entering your name at a designated time, see you there!

- Mark Will, Social Concerns Committee Chairman

Thank you for supporting the American Red Cross blood program!



2017 Church Council

- President Randy Stoll
Vice President Shirley Moleno
Treasurer John Hicks
Secretary Joanne Figge
Senior Pastor Will Hartfelder

Members at Large:

- Vanessa Stewart
Lisa Kuhar
Bill Kulju
Jeff Brenning

Advent Eucharist and Luncheon Concludes with Christmas Carol Concert

The class of 5 year old children of Little Blessings Preschool serenaded the attendees of the Advent Eucharist with Christmas Carols during the luncheon on Tuesday, December 12.



Westerville Police Officer Carrie O'Neil recognized as December Police Officer of the Month

On December 7, 2016, Central Ohio Crime Stoppers, along with the Fraternal Order of Police Capital City Lodge #9 and United Dairy Farmers, recognized Westerville Police Officer Carrie O'Neil as the recipient of the Bryan Hurst/Tony Luzio Officer of the Month Award for December.

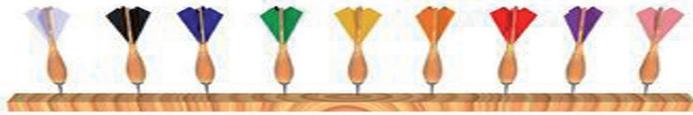
Carrie was recognized for her heroic efforts on October 11 in aiding in the rescue of two persons from an automobile that was sinking in an 8 foot deep pond on N. State Street.

After swimming out to the vehicle to give instructions to the people trapped inside the sinking car, Carrie kept them calm until the fire department arrived with rescue equipment. When the occupants were safely removed from the car, it sank to the bottom of the pond.

This is why we pray for and thank God for our first responders. If you didn't think you knew a first responder personally, you know Officer Carrie O'Neil. We at Grace, along with all the citizens of Westerville, are extremely proud of Carrie.

The award presentation took place at the Fire Fighters Union Hall, 379 W. Broad Street.

- from stopcrime.org



GRACE DARTBALL TEAM 19 - 23 Still Tied for First

- From Robert Bassett, Dartball Captain

The Grace dartball team sits at 19 wins and 23 losses and tied for first place in their division. After a couple off weeks against Epiphany and Christ, the team hopes that the new year and the couple extra pounds from the holidays will result in wins in early 2017.

Garry Bright paces the team with a .300+ batting average while Cecil Budd continues to have multiple home runs virtually every week. (Cec has more homers by himself than the rest of the team in aggregate this season.)

1/5	at Reynoldsburg
1/12	at Trinity
1/19	Home v. Obetz
1/26	Home v. Rome
2/2	at Grove City
2/9	at Lockbourne
2/16	Home v. Grace
2/23	Home v. Grace of God

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church has been serving the Westerville Community for more than 107 years. Grace supports local ministries such as the Westerville Area Resource Ministry, Westerville Partnership Habitat for Humanity, Red Cross Bloodmobile and Westerville CROP Walk. Grace also supports Lutheran Social Services programs like Faith Mission and provides weekly meeting space for a Boy Scout Troop and three AA groups.

GRACE'S WEEKLY BULLETIN IS ONLINE

To access, use your smartphone or tablet and navigate to the Grace website (<http://grace43081.org>)

Select > "Calendar" • Select > "Bulletins"
• Click on the bulletin item you want to see!

Some benefits of using the online bulletin:

- Save Grace the cost of printing
- Save a few trees
- Ease of use - view the bulletin any way you want!

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

100 E. Schrock Road, Westerville, OH 43081

Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

PH: 614-882-3026

Web: www.grace43081.org

e-mail: office@grace43081.org

Facebook: [facebook.com/GraceEvangelicalLutheranWesterville](https://www.facebook.com/GraceEvangelicalLutheranWesterville)

Visit our website at www.grace43081.org

Rev. William A. Hartfelder, Senior Pastor

VM 11

w.hartfelder@grace43081.org

Rev. Richard O. Walston, Visitation Pastor

Cell 614-832-9159

rjwalston@msn.com

Molly King, Director of Youth and Family Ministries

Cell 614-581-6675

m.king@grace43081.org

Lora Moore, Director of Music Ministries

l.moore@grace43081.org

Linda Hoch, Organist

llkgraf102078@earthlink.net; [mnet](mailto:mnet@earthlink.net)

Marjie Penn, Administrative Assistant

office@grace43081.org

Amy Quinn, Business Manager

VM 18

amy.quinn@grace43081.org

Kathy Wahlenmaier, Financial Manager

k.wahlenmaier@grace43081.org

Jocelyn Shuman, Preschool Director

VM 14

littleblessingspreschool@grace43081.org



**WNALC Newsletter, Nov 2016 Edition available for viewing at:
http://wnalc.org/uploads/News_WNALC_16_Nov.pdf**

Inside the current issue issue:

- *Chair's Corner* • *Have you thought of....* • *Clyde's Country Kitchen* • *Stewardship Sips* • *Mission District Reps* • *Mission Bank Labels* • *Donation Form* • *Membership Form*

THE CHAIR'S CORNER NEWS FOR WOMEN OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH (WNALC)

Dear Sisters in Christ,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I don't know about you but these last couple of months have been very stressful for me with the riots, police killings, elections, and etc.

Everywhere I turned there seemed to be another incident that would sadden my heart with the inhumanity and deep disrespect people have for one another. I wonder how, in the world, we ever sank this low. This didn't happen overnight; it has happened slowly, over decades, without some of us even realizing that it was happening. However, I believe that by the grace of our Lord, things are about to change.

When pastors return to teaching the Scriptures and preaching the truth in love, we will see an awakening and a hunger within our nation. Sometimes we forget that we are really not in control. God is and always will be. That is why I am internally grateful to be a part of the North American Lutheran Church. Did you know that we are one of the fastest growing Lutheran churches? I believe that it is our core values (Christ-Centered, Mission-Driven, Traditionally-Grounded and Congregationally-Focused) that draw new members to our churches. As the Women of the NALC (WNALC) we have a unique ministry within the NALC.

The ministry that we have within our congregations is never trivial. It takes many hands to fulfill the work the church is called to do. God works through those who have a willing and loving spirit.

On behalf of the Women's Council, I would like to thank each and every woman within our NALC congregations for her service within her congregation and community. You are an example for others to follow.

At the beginning of November the Women's Council had their fall retreat to set goals and gathering for next year. We were blessed to be able to meet at the St. Peter's Lutheran Church of Lexington County, SC for our two day session. Southern hospitality was abundant at St. Peter's and the fellowship we shared with the Women's groups was deeply appreciated. And, oh my, the meals were so delicious that I and several others requested "family" recipes. (My husband is originally from South Georgia, so I got a creamed corn recipe and, as a present from our host, Clyde Sanders, a bag of grits. My husband is a happy camper to say the least.) It was wonderful to share ideas for fundraisers, missions, and congregational activities. I encourage you, if you have the opportunity, to check out what's going on in other congregations. Who knows, we might be inspired by a new idea.

We are looking forward to the great things happening within your congregation.

Remember: everything we do in the name of Christ is important. So please send these articles to our newsletter editor, Lane Magera, at wnalcnews@yahoo.com. Also, be sure to include any events or dedications that your women's groups or your congregation will be doing. Send the article with photos if possible. Remember that the newsletter is sent out every other month.

To access our newsletters and other pertinent information about the WNALC, visit our webpage at www.wnalc.org.

In Christ,
Jessie Phillips, WNALC Chair

Ed. Note: See Grace Council Meeting Minutes, Page 8, Topic 3, (WNALC)

Thanks to many people and the wonderful children, the Family Christmas Eve service **"From Heaven Above"** went very well! The kids did a great job!! Special thanks to those who put in extra time to make the program a success: Kristi George, Linda Hoch, Kirsten Hicks, Karen Bale, Shirley Moleno and Fred Phanz. Also a special thanks to Sue Mahrt who created our props. The star was beautiful! -Molly King

