

Grace Notes

October 2021



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH • 7300 W DIVISION • RIVER FOREST IL 60305 • 708-366-6900 • WWW.GRACERIVERFOREST.ORG



Seventh and eighth grade confirmation class is meeting in the Memorial Garden this fall.

Free indeed — to follow Christ

by Pastor Dave Lyle

Looking ahead to Reformation Day and All Saints Sunday

As the calendar turns to October, the church year moves us closer to some of my favorite festivals. While neither quite approaches the mystery of Christmas or the majesty of Easter, these two Sundays arrive back-to-back, proclaiming central truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I'm thinking, of course, of Reformation Sunday and All Saints Sunday.

Reformation Sunday is a festival of the Holy Spirit, a celebration of the renewal of the church that came through the Protestant Reformation. Our thoughts tend to run toward Luther and his

True freedom is not located in ourselves; it is located in Christ, and comes only from him.

fellow Wittenbergers, and rightly so. Their bold faithfulness is a witness that runs across the centuries. But this day is not a day to look backwards; neither is it a day to get lost in celebrating a denominational identity. The great insight of the reformers, of course, was to make sure Christ retains his proper place as our crucified and risen Lord who is at the center of all things.

The gospel for Reformation is from John 8: "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." And how are we to continue in

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September 2021 brings a new season of ministry at Grace

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this freeing word of truth? Jesus tells us: "If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." There is a lot of talk about freedom these days, but it's often people insisting on putting themselves before others or just complaining about things they don't want to do. True freedom is not located in ourselves; it is located in Christ and comes only from him.

This is the spirit of the Reformation, that Christ has truly set us free; free to follow his way of living in service of others.

Even set free, we live lives marked by sin and bound by death. This is precisely what makes All Saints Sunday the perfect follow-up to Reformation. The day's readings are marked with tears in the face of death, our own tears as told by Isaiah and Revelation, and Jesus' tears as he weeps with us. But on this day, we proclaim the promise that these tears shall be wiped away. Why? Because freedom in Christ draws us through death into life, as we read in John 11. "Lazarus, come out," Jesus cries before commending others to "unbind him and let him go." Jesus releases us from the claim of sin and the shackles of death. We have been set free on both sides of the grave.

These two Sundays remind us of the deep, abiding power of the gospel. We are free and alive today, and we will live free into eternity because of what Jesus Christ has done for us. Free to praise God. Free to serve others. Free to follow Christ. Truly free.

As an October bonus, our ninth graders will celebrate Confirmation on Sunday, October 17. If you have looked

Following, serving, worshipping God above all else; these are not the markings of an easy life, but they are the marks of freedom that come when we keep Christ at the center.

into the Memorial Garden on Sunday mornings, you'll see our current Confirmation students gathered between worship services each week to learn about the faith into which they were baptized. There, surrounded by tangible reminders of the great cloud of witnesses, they are being prepared for the free life of discipleship.

They are preparing to make public profession of their faith and to promise to live into the covenant of baptism. Following, serving, worshipping God above all else; these are not the markings of an easy life, but they are the marks of freedom that come when we keep Christ at the center.

So, in about a month, we'll wear red and hear brass and joyfully sing "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." A week later, we'll light candles and shed tears while we sing "For All the Saints." The message each week is the same: Whether we live or whether we die, we belong to the Lord. And in the Lord, we are free.

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE

Sunday, October 3, 8:30 and 11 a.m.

19TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Genesis 2:18-24, Psalm 8, Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12; Mark 10:2-16

Sunday, October 10, 8:30 and 11 a.m.

20TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Amos 5:6-7, 10-15; Psalm 90:12-17, Hebrews 4:12-16, Mark 10:17-31

Sunday, October 17, 8:30 and 11 a.m.

21ST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Isaiah 53:4-12, Psalm 91:9-16, Hebrews 5:1-10, Mark 10:35-45

Sunday, October 24, 8:30 and 11 a.m.

22ND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Jeremiah 31:7-9, Psalm 126, Hebrews 7:23-28, Mark 10:46-52

Sunday, October 31, 8:30 and 11 a.m.

REFORMATION DAY

Jeremiah 31:31-34, Psalm 46, Romans 3:19-28, John 8:31-36

Sunday, November 7, 8:30 and 11 a.m.

ALL SAINTS SUNDAY

Isaiah 25:6-9, Psalm 24, Revelation 21:1-6a, John 11:32-44



Meaningful conversations and community over a pint

by Pastor Troy Medlin

Grace Church's Theology on Tap gatherings started on Zoom last January to provide another outlet for community and connection during the lonely winter months of early 2021, especially for the young adults among us. We began meeting about once a month with three or four people on a screen and would spend about an hour checking in with each other, sharing our highs and lows, and then diving into a faith-related topic and letting the conversation flow from there. So often I would be joyfully surprised by the way the Spirit would strengthen my faith through the perspectives, questions, and reflections offered by those in the Zoom meeting. I would leave nourished, and others would as well.

This summer our monthly meetings transitioned to in-person as we gathered mostly outside at Oak Park Brewing Company. With the added blessing of being able to see each other face to face the conversations and community continued. So far, our topics of discussion have included questions such as: What is faith? Who has modeled the life of faith for us? What difference does the fact that God is not just one but three-in-one make in our lives? What does it mean that we are saved by grace? Saved from what? What is grace? We have also mused together about what makes us Lutheran.

What better way to spend an evening than being outside the church walls talking about how theology makes a difference in our lives while getting to know others who are a part of our community. We are hoping to get a few more months of outdoor seating before the weather gets too cold.



Join other young adults on the fourth Thursday of every month at 7 p.m. at Oak Park Brewing Company, 155 S. Oak Park Avenue. Those who identify as young adults and young adults at heart are all welcome!

Your faith will be strengthened, maybe even in surprising ways.

The next Theology on Tap gathering is on October 28. With fall weather ahead, I'd suggest emailing me a few days before the gathering to confirm the date and place. I can also add you to an email list for monthly reminders about Theology on Tap.

Pastor Troy (tmedlin@graceriverforest.org)

Update from the Grace Refugee Ministry

We're forming a new Core Team to welcome another family

Continued thanks for all who support this ongoing activity. Our first family is settling in nicely. The boys are going to school, and the adults are slogging through all the paperwork involved in identification cards, job applications, etc. Young Alisha gave me a "thumbs up" several times when we last visited. She was so shy initially, but she is warming to us. Stay tuned for photographs on the Atrium bulletin board as we get permission to share more about this sweet family.

As we all know, many Afghan refugees are heading our way. I have contacted RefugeeOne and shared that we are ready financially and have collected the needed household items to support another family. But we will need another Core Team of volunteers. If you are interested in taking on this responsibility, please let me know as soon as possible. There is some training and background checking that will need to be done.

We are blessed to be part of God's work at Grace.

Linda Street (kentuckystreets53@gmail.com)





ADULT EDUCATION

Adult Education classes meet at 9:45 a.m. on Sunday mornings. The Adult Education Committee is hoping to return to in-person classes this fall. If you have suggestions for Adult Ed programming, please contact Ted Anton of the Adult Education Committee (tanton@depaul.edu).

October 3

Linda Street, Grace Refugee Ministry
Refugees: Who They Are and Why We Care

October 10

Lori Wilbert, Deaconess/Prison Chaplain
Stateville Prison in Joliet

Readings from men learning to incorporate Reformatory Justice into their rehabilitation, a process in which the offender makes amends to the victim, owning the crime and moving forward.

October 24

Lori Martin, Envision Benefits Specialists
Healthcare Choices in Retirement

An informational presentation about the changing Medicare landscape and healthcare choices in retirement. Gain a real understanding of how Medicare works and current and anticipated future costs. Leave with the planning tools you need to make good choices about your future healthcare.

Reformation Day in the Church Library

If there is ever a time a Lutheran should be checking out their church library, it is in October as we approach the celebration of Reformation Day (October 31), the historic beginning of our protestant roots.

Have you actually ever read the 95 Theses that Martin Luther nailed to the Castle Church door in Wittenberg, Germany? These basic concepts shared 500 years ago still impact the world and the Lutheran church today.

The Grace Church Library houses a curated selection of books and videos about the Reformation and biographies of many of the key players. Most of this collection is found on the bookcase under the north-facing windows closest to the check-out desk.

One of our most recent additions is “October 31, 1517: Martin Luther and the Day That Changed the World,” by well-known church historian and friend of Grace Dr. Martin E. Marty. In this 114-page book, Dr. Marty reflects on the concept of the entire life of the believer as one of repentance. How does this work exactly? And what of justification?

The delight of this book is that it is very readable. Often, deep dives into the theology of Martin Luther or analyses of his 95

November 7

“How Luther’s Circle Reached the People”

Anna Johnson, Associate Professor of Reformation Church History, Garrett Theological Seminary

The Wittenberg circle was critical to the Reformation, from advising cities and princes about instituting reform to writing broadsides for the public. While Luther gets the credit, this talk will show that the Reformation was a group effort.



Theses entails laborious, research-type study. But Dr. Marty’s conversational tone in this book allows a non-seminary-student Lutheran to begin to understand the heart of our founder, the young monk from Wittenberg.

And an extra – all of the 95 Theses are printed out at the back of the book. So now you can answer, “yes” next time someone asks if you have read them.

Linda Street

Grace Church Library Committee

Grace Church’s library, on the first floor, just inside the Division Street door, is open for self-service on Sundays and during the week when the building is open.

Are you looking for a specific book? You can search the church library online. Go to GraceRiverForest.org, click on Faith Formation, then Church Library. You’ll see a button that will take you to the search site.

Confirmation weekend on October 16–17



Twelve young people of our congregation will affirm their baptismal vows in the Rite of Confirmation during the 11 a.m. worship service on Sunday, October 17. They will share their personal statements about their faith journey the night before, at the Witness Service on Saturday, October 16, at 7 p.m. All are welcome to attend.

This is the second year in which Grace confirmation students have made their affirmation of baptism in the fall of their ninth grade year. (Previously the confirmation service was in early May.) At last year's service, because of Covid, only a limited number of family members were present in person at a combined witness and confirmation service.

It's good to be able to once again invite the entire congregation to be present with these young people on this important day in their lives. Their witness statements will be published in a booklet later this month. Look for copies near the reception desk at Grace.

2021 Confirmands

Cole Baird
Anna Mae Bullock
Audrey Ruth Chizzo
Anne Caroline Claud
Lauren Gullo
Andrew Henderson

Gavin David Jones
Jacqueline Mae Keller
Olivia Laura Kibler
Anna Marie Price
David Alfred Schubkegel
Benjamin G. Schueler

Children and Youth Ministry back on track this fall

Confirmation class for 7th and 8th graders returned to in-person meetings on Sunday, September 19. The group is meeting outside this fall in the Memorial Garden, led by the pastors.

Sunday School classes begin on October 17, also in person. Children in preschool and kindergarten will meet in the JK classroom on the lower level of the school. First through sixth grade students will gather in the 3rd floor commons for worship, songs, stories and projects, led by Julie Modrich and parent volunteers. Children and adults will be masked — just like in school this fall.

Grace Youth meet in the Youth Room every Sunday morning at 9:45 a.m., sometimes for fellowship, at other times for Teen Talk discussions led by Pastor Troy. They'll be participating in service projects on October 3 and November 21.

Schedules for Youth Ministry, Sunday School, and Confirmation can be downloaded from the Grace website.



The Welcome Back Picnic for Grace youth included spending time tying blankets to cozy up the Youth Room.

Bach Cantata Vespers worship on October 31 observes Reformation Day with hymns and texts from Luther

Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott, BWV 80
A mighty fortress is our God

October 31, 3:45 p.m.

Luther's Reformation chorale, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" assures us that God's promises are true and remain forever. Bach's cantata on the hymn, first performed in 1739, uses all four stanzas of the hymn, from the complex counterpoint in the opening chorus to a straightforward four-part setting in the closing chorale. The arias use material from an earlier cantata on baptismal themes ("Come into my heart's house").

The prelude to the service, Barbara Harbach's "Suite Luther," composed for the 2017 celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, also uses the melody of "A Mighty Fortress," along with two other hymns by Luther. The anthem sung by the choir is Mendelssohn's setting of a text by Luther, *Verleih uns Frieden gnädiglich* (Grant peace, we pray).

James L. Brooks of Harmony Community Church in North Lawndale is the homilist for the service. Mark Bangert previews the cantata in the Seminar Room at 3 p.m.



Jazz It Up benefit with Andy Tecson on November 5



Voice of Care invites all to Jazz It Up on Friday, November 5, with a benefit concert featuring Andy Tecson and the ChurchJazz Ensemble here at Grace. General admission tickets are \$40. A VIP Ticket (\$50) admits one plus allows a Very Important Person with special needs to attend the event. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., the concert begins at 7 p.m., and a reception follows. All proceeds benefit the ministry of Voice of Care, which equips churches to embrace, empower and engage people with disabilities in inclusive Christian discipleship. Tickets are available at VoiceofCare.org. If you'd like to know more about the event or the organization, talk with Grace member Tony Stephens.

LSSI Annual True Friend Celebration, October 7

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois' annual fundraiser on Thursday, October 7, 7 p.m., features a conversation between travel writer Rick Steves and Pastor Peter Marty in an online virtual format. You can also attend an in-person watch party. Learn more about the event, register and donate at LSSI's website (lssi.org/truefriend).

LSSI provides care for children, families and older adults throughout the state and is one of the organizations supported by Grace's benevolence budget.



Hymn festival celebrates the music and legacy of Carl Schalk



Sunday, October 17, 4 p.m.

Grace's Parish Choir and brass ensemble will join choirs from Concordia University Chicago in a hymn festival celebrating the music of composer and hymnody scholar Carl Schalk, who passed away in January, 2021.

Carl, a longtime member of Grace, was a noted scholar and composer of hymns and choir anthems. He taught music at Concordia University Chicago and served Grace for many years as Assistant Director of Music. He and Paul Bouman founded the Bach Cantata Vespers Ministry in 1971.

The concert is part of Concordia's annual Lectures in Church Music. The program includes hymns and anthems composed by Schalk, including hymn concertatos such as "O Day Full of Grace" that are very familiar to our congregation.

All are invited to the in-person program at Grace. It will also be available on livestream.

Kontras Quartet

Friday, October 15, 7 p.m.

Pre-concert talk at 6:15 p.m.

"Wanderlust: Transcendent Murmurations"

Franz Schubert, *Quartettsatz*

Florence Price, *String Quartet #2*

Bongani Ndodana-Breen, *Apologia at Umzimvubu*

Claude Debussy, *String Quartet in G minor*

In person at Grace. Admission is free. Please wear a mask.

The concert will also be available via livestream on the Kontras Quartet YouTube channel.



The Kontras Quartet string ensemble is in residence at Grace and often plays in Sunday morning worship services.



Chicago Choral Artists

"Justice and Mercy: Music for Our Time"

October 22 & 23, 7:30 p.m.

October 24, 4 p.m.

Michael Costello, Artistic Director

Kimberly E. Jones, Guest Artist

Joel Thompson, *Seven Last Words of the Unarmed*

Eugene Rogers, arr., "Glory" from *Selma*

Steve Dobrogosz, *Mass*

Melissa Dunphy, *The Gonzales Cantata*

In person at Grace. Tickets (adults \$45, seniors \$40, students \$25) are available at ChicagoChoralArtists.org.

Cornerstones

Bible study for seniors with treats and fellowship at 9:30 a.m. and Bible study with the pastors at 10 a.m. On October 20 there is Morning Prayer at 11 a.m., followed by lunch in Fellowship Hall.

Religion in Literature

The group will meet again on October 15 to discuss Richard Wright's "The Man Who Lived Underground, led by David Heim. A copy of the book is available in the Grace library. All are welcome. Email Jill.Baumgaertner@wheaton.edu to be added to the group's mailing list for more information and meeting locations. The reading list for 2021-22 is posted on the Grace website.

Theology on Tap

Come for community and monthly conversations about faith and life. The next gathering is scheduled for Thursday, October 28, 7 p.m., at Oak Park Brewing Company, 155 S. Oak Park Avenue. Email tmedlin@graceriverforest.org for more information.

Moms of Littles

Mothers with children of any and all ages, infants through teens, meet twice a month, once in person and once virtually. They gather in person on Thursday, October 7, at 6:30 p.m. in the Youth Room at Grace; online on October 21, 6:30 p.m. If you have a "little" or are expecting one, please join us for community and support. Contact Ali Carris at beauvais.carris@gmail.com or (312) 720-9473 to be added to the email list or learn more about the group.

Dads of Grace

Join Pastor Lyle and other dads on Monday, October 25, at 7:30 p.m. for an evening of fellowship. Email Pastor Lyle for the particulars (dlyle@graceriverforest.org).

Men of Grace

The Men of Grace group meets at 9 a.m. on Saturday, October 30, at Grace. Email Pastor Troy for more information (tmedlin@graceriverforest.org).

Finding Hope

This support group for people with chronic illness meets on the 2nd Friday of the month. The next meeting is on October 8, 10 a.m., at Grace. Chronic illness may include anything that you deal with on a day to day basis whether physical or psychological. The group meets for about an hour to pray together, share a devotion and check in with each other. Meetings may also occasionally involve a guest speaker or an informative video. Contact Judie McDonnell (judie.mcdonnell@att.net) if you have questions or need to arrange a ride.

Retired Leaders

This group of retired pastors meets once a month at Grace for programs on a wide range of topics. Meetings are also available on Zoom. The next meeting is on October 12, 10 a.m., in the church library for Mark Bouman's presentation "What's Up and Down with Lake Michigan: A Field Museum Perspective." Contact John Halvorson (johnlhalvorson@yahoo.com) for more information.

Grace Notes Mailing Crew

Every month volunteers fold, tab, and label this newsletter for mailing. They welcome more helpers. Join them on Thursday, October 28, 9:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall.

Building hours, Fall 2021

Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sundays, 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., and for scheduled activities in the afternoon and evening.

The building will be closed during the day on October 11.

Open weekday evenings and Saturday mornings for scheduled activities. Please wear a mask when you come to Grace on Sundays and during the week.

Pastors' emergency phone

Call 708-689-3032 for emergency pastoral care on weekends, or when the Grace building is closed.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Grace Lutheran Church General Fund

Church budgeted contributions

July 1, 2021 – September 26, 2021 \$ 490,000
(13 Sundays, \$37,700 per week)

Church actual contributions

July 1, 2021 – September 26, 2021 \$ 322,000
(Last year at this time: \$300,000)

Church giving is \$168,000 (34%) below budget, but \$22,000 (7%) ahead of last year. The General Fund deficit on September 26 was \$170,000 (\$140,000 last year through September 30). The deficit includes the September 30 payroll and most September expenses.

Grace Notes is published monthly by Grace Lutheran Church and School, 7300 Division St., River Forest, Ill. It is mailed to Grace members, parents of students at Grace School, and friends of the congregation. This issue was mailed via U.S. Postal Service Bulk Mail on Friday, October 1, with the hope that it will arrive in your mailbox no later than October 9. Copies are also available at Grace.

Deadlines and submissions. The November issue of Grace Notes will be mailed on October 29. The deadline for copy is Wednesday, October 20; the issue covers events through early December. Send news to ggotsch@graceriverforest.org. Please limit submissions to news relating to Grace Lutheran Church and School, its mission, ministries, and the benevolences the congregation supports. Articles should be no longer than 500 words. Submissions may be edited for length, clarity, and relevance.

Receive your flu shot at Grace on October 17

With all the focus on Covid-19 over the past 20 months it's easy to forget about the seasonal flu. According to the CDC, seasonal flu activity was uncommonly low during the 2020-21 flu season. This is most likely because of all the things that we were doing to prevent the spread of Covid. Social distancing, wearing masks and paying closer attention to handwashing, as well as working and studying remotely also helped to prevent flu as well as Covid..

We are now entering the 2021-22 flu season. Many of these mitigation efforts have been relaxed and we have resumed much of our normal activity. Flu activity often begins to increase in October, peaks in January and February, and lasts into April. The expectation is that this flu season will not be as quiet as last year. To protect yourself and those around you, it's important to get your flu shot.

Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine every season with rare exceptions. If you have one of these conditions, talk with your health care provider about the appropriate vaccine for your situation:

- Allergy to eggs or any of the ingredients in the vaccine.
- Guillain-Barré Syndrome (a severe paralyzing illness, also called GBS).

- A severe allergic reaction to a previous dose of any other flu vaccine.
- If you are not feeling well.

Grace will be hosting our annual flu shot clinic in the gym on Sunday, October 17, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Osco pharmacists will be administering the vaccines. Shingles and pneumonia vaccines will also be available that morning. It's an easy, convenient way to take care of getting the whole family vaccinated. No registration is needed, but please bring your Medicare or insurance card.

What about Covid vaccines and boosters?

People have asked me about the possibility that we would have Covid vaccine available on the day of the flu shot clinic. However, the frequent updates about boosters, third doses, and vaccinating children under 12 makes offering Covid vaccine at the same time as flu shots difficult to coordinate. So Covid vaccines will not be available on October 17 at Grace. However we are hoping to host another Covid vaccination clinic at Grace in early November.

Pat Gulik, Parish Nurse

Sunday morning flu shot clinic

October 17, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

- Walk in and get your shot — no need to sign up in advance. One-stop vaccinations for the whole family.
- Please bring your Medicare and/or insurance card.
- Shingles and pneumonia vaccines are also available.

Social Ministry projects: Caring for the least of these

Coat Drive, October 3-17

Drop off new or gently used coats to be shared with people in and around Chicago this fall and winter. They'll be distributed to needy families through the Salvation Army; primarily to adult clients at the Harmony Food Pantry in North Lawndale; and through Hope House, also in North Lawndale, a halfway house for gentlemen who have faced incarceration. Bring your donations to the bin in Grace's atrium through Sunday, October 17.

Fall Food Drive, October 31–November 14

Nonperishable packaged foods can be brought to the collection bin in the atrium. Food will be shared with Beyond Hunger, the Forest Park Food Pantry, Harmony Food Pantry, and the food pantry at Fraternité Notre Dame.

Christmas Stockings

The Social Ministry Committee is getting ready for the annual Christmas stocking project that provides toiletries and other necessities for homeless adults and youth in Chicago served by The Night Ministry. This involves making and filling 75 oversized fleece stockings. Committee members would welcome contributions of Christmas-themed fleece fabric and/or cash donations to assist in the purchase of fabric. Contact JoEllyn Dorsey (jdorsey32@juno.com).



God's grace at work at Grace School

The Forward in Faith Campaign Committee has been facilitating cottage meetings this fall, gathering Grace members, school families and alumni to talk about the past, present and future of Grace School. At these meetings people share memories of Grace School and its impact on students and their families. Pastor Lyle, who has attended several of these meetings, says he has come away blessed by the experience and by hearing stories about Grace School graduates .

"It's an amazing gift to hear how Grace School has blessed these families and their children through the generations. And it's a joy to share with people that Grace is just as wonderful today for our three children as it was for their children. Grace continues to be a place where young people not only receive an excellent academic experience; they come to know the grace of God at work in Christ and experienced in community."

Here's one family's story, shared by Esther Armstrong, a member of the Endowment Campaign Committee and parent of two recent Grace grads, Rachel ('18) and Peter ('20).

"My husband, Neal, and I had moved to Oak Park, had heard good things about the schools here, and assumed we would send the kids to a Christian or a Lutheran preschool and then public school after that. Rachel started in the preschool at Grace, and the more we heard, the more we were seriously considered keeping our kids there for elementary school.

"One of the first experiences I had that really made me think this might be a place for us to stay long term was when Rachel was in JK with Mr. Chandler as her teacher. Mrs Erickson — Phyllis Erickson, longtime church member — was one of the aides in the classroom. I remember picking up Rachel after school one day. I had heard that someone close to Phyllis had passed away and was going to tell her how sorry I was, when she pulled me aside to tell me about a conversation she'd had with Rachel. Mrs. Erickson was feeling down, and she must have expressed that to the class. She and Rachel talked about how Mrs. Erickson's loved one had died, and Rachel had comforted her in her little four-year-old-self way, telling her 'that's okay, because she's going to be in heaven with Jesus and one day you'll be with her, too.' It really touched me because I thought how wonderful it was for a little person and an older person to connect over faith. And I thought, where else is my child going to have that experience if not at a Christian school?

"I really liked the sense of community, of family that my kids felt at Grace. I grew up as pastor's kid in a pretty small church, and when you're a pastor's kid in a small church pretty much everyone in the congregation is like a second parent. You have that real sense of family. I remember searching for churches

before my kids were born, looking for that feeling. It dawned on me that my experience as a child had been kind of unique and probably I wasn't going to find that anywhere else. But I felt that at Grace School, especially for my kids.

"In the back of our mind, well, we thought we'd switch the kids to public middle school, which would have so much more to offer than a small school like Grace. But we changed our mind after we realized what a special place a PK-8 school is for junior

high students. They're connected with younger kids, they have leadership roles in the school, they get to experience those awkward preteen years in the safety of a place where they feel at home. That was really helpful for our family.

"And there's the music. When I first started hearing the Grace School kids singing in church, even before my kids were old

enough to fully participate, it would give me chills — the depth of their participation in music and leading worship. I felt, my kids should have an experience like this, where, for example, at the Christmas concerts they get to sing with a full orchestra and participate with so many different types of musicians. It was a very rich experience for them."

"I really liked the sense of community, of family that my kids felt at Grace."

Esther Armstrong



The Armstrong family, Easter Sunday, 2016.

Forward IN FAITH

The goal of the Forward in Faith Endowment Campaign is to raise \$5 million over the next three years to support the future of Grace Lutheran School. The Endowment fund will generate income that will help stabilize school finances and make it possible to offer financial assistance to students whose families are unable to afford full tuition. The endowment will also support competitive salaries for teachers and provide resources to support individualized learning throughout the school.

If you would like to attend a cottage meeting, pledge to the campaign, or make a one-time donation, please visit the Forward in Faith page at GraceRiverForest.org. Or contact one of the Forward in Faith Committee chairs: Lori Martin (lmartin7@me.com) or Dick Martens (richardmartens10@gmail.com).



School students “Walk With Grace” on Friday, October 1

Grace School’s annual walkathon “Walk With Grace” involves Grace students in raising money for the school and also in contributing to a charity. This helps students learn about needs in their community and what they can do to serve. This year, in addition to asking friends and family members to sponsor their walk, students are collecting food for Beyond Hunger, the food pantry that serves Oak Park and River Forest and other surrounding zip codes in the city and suburbs.

Students have been bringing in food donations during the week leading up to the walk. Classes are competing for who can bring in the most food items; the winning class will get a movie and popcorn afternoon. About a week before the Walk students and parents also distribute information and bags to homes along their route in River Forest, asking neighbors to leave food donations in front of their houses for Grace kids to pick up on the day of the Walk.

Older students walk farther than younger ones, and they bring wagons to carry the food donations back to Grace. The morning will end with games, prizes, and a celebration on the field at Priory Park — and then students have the afternoon off.

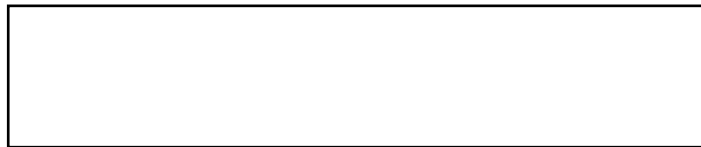


GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Help and encouragement after the death of a loved one

GriefShare is a special weekly seminar and support group designed to help you rebuild your life. We know it hurts, and we want to help.

Tuesdays, 7:00-8:30 p.m.
October 12, 2021 - January 11, 2022
Grace Lutheran Church, 7300 Division Street, River Forest
Call 708-366-6900 for more information
or email Linda Bernard at lm_bernard@hotmail.com



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