

Weekly Announcements

Annual Slovak Benefit Dinner

Saturday, May 17, at 5 p.m. (Fellowship Hall)

Grace Church will be sponsoring its annual gathering benefiting the Center for Christian Education (CCE) in Martin, Slovakia. The happy hour will start at 5 p.m., followed by an authentic Slovak dinner, a cash bar, and fellowship. CCE leaders will also present an update of their ministry. Tickets for the event are \$50 per person. You can buy yours in the Atrium before or after worship on May 4 and May 11. Or, go to Grace's website and click Donate. The tile for the event on Vanco is called CCE Benefit Event.

Welcome Kits

Grace's Social Ministry Committee is organizing 30 Welcome Kits for Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI). The kits will be distributed to 5- to 10-year-old foster care children served by LSSI. So often, children arrive at foster care homes feeling anxious and alone with only a black plastic bag containing their possessions. Packed in duffle bags, the Welcome Kits contain comfort items, such as a fleece blankets, and stuffed animals, and hygiene items, including shampoo and toothpaste.

We have been working on making tie fleece blankets for the kits and already have some of the items needed including books, stuffed animals and toothbrushes. We are asking the congregation to sign up to purchase the additional items on the list and drop them off at Grace by June 1.

We will work with Grace's Vacation Bible School students to pack the kits in early June. If you have any questions please contact Stephanie Wilkening at stephwilkening@gmail.com or Heidi Hamernik at docheidihamernik@gmail.com. Thank you for helping a foster care child feel more welcome in a new home.



What's Happening: May 4 - May 11

Focus Groups: Sunday and Wednesday at 11:30 a.m.; Thursday at 7 p.m.

The next step in the strategic planning process is to get together with the congregation for a conversation about the questions asked in the survey and go a bit deeper to learn what's behind some of your answers. Your input matters so please sign up! There will be three opportunities for this discussion, so please sign up for the date that works best for you. If you have any questions, reach out to Pastor Dave Lyle (dlyle@graceriverforest.org). You can sign up by visiting Grace Links or scan the QR code.



Cornerstones: Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. (Church Library)

Parish Choir Rehearsal: Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. (Music Room)

Memorial Service for Cathy Barker: Thursday at 11 a.m. (Grace Church)

Finding Hope: Friday at 10 a.m. (Church Library)

Memorial Service for John Albright: Saturday at 4 p.m. (Grace Church)

Operation Deluge: Sunday from 9 a.m. until 12 p.m. (Atrium)

Stop by to sign a card and send some cheer Esther Armstrong.

Adult Education: Sunday at 9 a.m. (Seminar Room)

Grace Cantor Michael D. Costello will teach a two-session class on the inner workings of the pipe organ, focusing primarily on the construction of two instruments at Grace. Grace's larger instrument, used almost every time we worship, was dedicated in 1931 and again after major renovations and expansions in 1956 and 1986. The smaller instrument, used primarily as a continuo instrument for Bach Cantata Vespers liturgies, was built in Germany in 1969. To aid our discussion, class participants will be able to see (and play) the small educational pipe organ kit built for Grace in 2021.

Upcoming Events and Fellowship Groups

For more information about the Fellowship Groups, visit our website under Living Your Faith.

Faith Forum: Tuesday, May 13, at 10 a.m.

Christian Scharen, professor of worship at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, will speak about the evolving dynamics of congregational life and the changing cultural contexts for ministry. A pastor in the ELCA, Prof. Scharen has taught at Luther Seminary and served as director of Auburn Seminary's Center for the Study of Theological Education. **If you're attending, please try to arrive to the room five to ten minutes early as the school will be conducting a drill at 10 a.m.**

Moms of Littles: Thursday, May 15, at 6:30 p.m.

Religion in Literature: Friday, May 16, at 7:30 p.m.

Join us to hear several members of the group and of Grace read from their writing. In the past, this session has introduced us to friends' work that is surprising, moving, and downright excellent writing. Readers this year will be Craig Mindrum, Jeff Wood, Liz Hanson, Jennifer Murtoff, and Steve Peterson. If you are a writer and would like to read, please contact Jill Baumgaertner. The meeting will take place in the home of Barbara Hofmaier and David Heim, 210 S. Elmwood, Oak Park. All are welcome!

Remembering Martin E. Marty: Sunday, May 18, at 9 a.m. (Seminar Room)

You are invited to attend and share memories of Marty. Dean Lueking will be leading the session.

Reception for Lisa Wolfanger: Sunday, May 18, at 11:15 a.m.

Join us as we celebrate Lisa as she retires from Grace School. More information will be shared soon.

Bach Cantata Vesepers: Sunday, May 18, at 3:45 p.m. (Sanctuary and Online)

Auf Christi Himmelfahrt allein, BWV 128 (On Christ's Ascension into heaven alone)

Jesus' Ascension into heaven forty days after Easter is an integral part of the Easter story and an important festival on the church's calendar. Bach's 1725 cantata for the day is a festive one, opening with a chorale fantasia scored for choir, horns, oboes, strings, and continuo. The choir and orchestra will also perform a new work based on a sermon by John Donne from 1628 called A Future Waking, by Paul D. Weber, written in memory of beloved professor, pastor, and church musician Mark P. Bangert.

Knitting Group: Tuesday, May 20, at 1 p.m. (Church Library)

Theology on Tap: Friday, May 23, at 7 p.m. (One Lake Brewing Company in Oak Park)

Men of Grace: Saturday, May 24, at 9 a.m.

Consonance: Fri., May 30, at 7:30 p.m. and Sun., June 1, at 3 p.m. (Sanctuary)

Juhi Bansal's "We Look to the Stars."

Tickets: Seniors: \$35 (65+), Adults: \$45

This cantata for SATB chorus, percussion, harp, and vocal soloists celebrates the wonders of the night sky. Drawing on myths and writings from different cultures, it embraces our universal connection with a journey through the night sky in song. With texts from diverse sources such as Rumi, H.P. Lovecraft, and Kabir, this 60-minute piece promises to be a moving and reflective conclusion to our season. The concert will also feature additional works by Marybeth Kurnat and Dan Forrest. Tickets can be purchased by going to Grace Links, calling our box office at 773.658.9799, or at the door.

Dads of Grace: June 2 at 7:30 p.m. (Offsite)

Grace Notes Mailing Crew: Thurs., June 5, at 9:30 a.m.



If you scan the QR code, it will take you to Grace Links; otherwise, visit our website (graceriverforest.org) to find it and more information about Grace and its opportunities.

True North Vacation Bible School: June 9 to 13

Children will discover what it means to trust Jesus in a wild world! To register, visit Grace Links. The link to pay the registration fee will also be there.

Slovak Mission Trip 2025: June 26 to July 8

If you are interested in participating, contact Pastor Dave Lyle (dlyle@graceriverforest.org).

Other Information

Justice and Peace

God calls us as Christians to live out our faith and be active in the world, serving others in need and working for Justice and Peace in our community and our country. In changing times, it is especially important that we be vigilant and stand up for what we believe. On Grace's website, you will find a page dedicated to resources that help us fulfill our Christian mission. If you know of other organizations that are working to support this mission, or specific programs or other initiatives, please let us know so they can be added to the page. Contact Troy Medlin (tmedlin@graceriverforest.org) with information and a web link.

Grace Church Library

The Church Library's May book list features stories about gardening, nature, and creation! To see what books the church is recommending for adults and children, visit Grace Links. To check out any book, please write your name on the card in the back of the book and leave it in the card holder on the table.

Be a Host Family: Transform Lives, Build Bridges

Are you ready to make a profound difference this summer? Grace Lutheran Church invites you to be part of an incredible journey by hosting a Slovak student between May 31-June 27, 2025. Your level of involvement is flexible—whether you can provide transportation to an event or welcome a student into your home for a few days to a week, every effort helps create a memorable experience. If you are interested in participating, reach out to Jessica Bullock (jesbullock23@gmail.com).

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