

We, the community of believers of Grace Lutheran Church, in response to God's love, using the example of Christ and strengthened by the Holy Spirit, are committed to make disciples of all people.

Dear "Community of Believers...",

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH – WE ARE...

- **ONE PEOPLE** united by our common faith in Jesus as our Savior, with
- **ONE MISSION** to transform the world through Christ's love, with
- **ONE MESSAGE** of Christ dying for all so that all might live.

How did you do with your resolutions in 2011? About the same as other years? Can you even remember those resolutions? Why do we struggle so much with resolutions? Is it because they are not realistic? Is it because we try to do it completely on our own without any outside help (even from God)? Failure is one of the biggest disappointments in life. However, as we enter another New Year we have the opportunity to start over with a renewed sense of hope and courage as we look to the future.

In Romans 12:12 the Holy Spirit gives some great ingredients for New Year's resolutions. We're told, ***"be joyful in hope, patient in affliction and faithful in prayer."*** ***"Being joyful in hope"*** should be pretty easy, especially since we have recently celebrated anew our Savior Jesus' birth into this world – the ***"Good News of great joy"*** that the angels announced to the shepherds. This fulfilled promise of a Savior gives us eternal joy that nothing in life can take from us – not even affliction.

"Being patient in affliction" can be considerably more difficult. Who of us likes to be mistreated, ill or under stress? Where can we get the strength to be patient? The power to do that does not come from within us, but from outside of us. In spite of all of his afflictions, Paul was confident ***"he could do all things in Christ Who strengthened him."***

Being ***"faithful in prayer"*** keeps us in touch with God. Jesus spent entire nights in prayer with His Father in Heaven so that He would have strength to carry out His mission of ultimately dying for us sinners so that we might have the forgiveness and eternal life that we do. Prayer is an excellent way for us to stay in touch with God and His strength and wisdom, knowing He can understand and relate to our afflictions.

How does this threefold resolution make a difference in our lives and the lives of those around us? It does because the Holy Spirit is at work within us to make us more and more the children of God we are. As we've celebrated God's gift of love at Christmas, may we respond, empowered by the Holy Spirit, with year-long and lifelong gifts of joy, patience and faithfulness...

In Jesus,
Pastor Brand

From Grace Lutheran Nursery and Pre-School...

During the month of December we were busy preparing for Christmas. Every day we learned a little bit more of the Christmas story and did a great job remembering all of the people and places.

We counted down to Christmas by using our classroom Advent wreath, adding an additional candle each week and singing our Advent song. Then we made individual Advent wreaths too and added a candle each week to those as well. We also moved our lamb on our Christmas banner so we could see how Christmas was getting closer. On our last day of school before our Christmas recess, we had a Christmas celebration. Our snack time was festive, we sang "Happy Birthday" to our special friend Jesus, finished our special gifts to our mommies and daddies, sang our special Christmas songs, (our favorite is, "Here We Go Round the Christmas Tree.") and surprised Pastor Brand by putting cards on his office door!

In the month of January we will learn about the wise men and will talk about winter weather. We will do a New Year's project, a wise man project, many snow scenes and lots of snow people!

If you know of anyone with a 3 or 4-year old child looking for a nursery school, we continue to have openings in our class for children to start in this New Year. Please tell them to stop by and visit or call us!

We wish everyone a Blessed, happy and healthy New Year

A NEW YEAR'S DAY BREAKFAST BRUNCH will be held Sunday, January 1, following 10:30 worship. In light of our 75th Anniversaries, cost for this will be \$7.50 for adults and \$0.75 for all children ages 5-12 who are in worship that morning. As an added feature to this brunch, there will be a "waffle station." Sign up on the Information Shelf so that we know how much food to have prepared.

SPECIAL EPIPHANY WORSHIP

On Friday, January 6, we will observe the Festival of Epiphany with a brief worship service at 7. It is the final “piece” in the series we did for Advent – “Proclaim the Wondrous Birth.” Following this worship service, we will undecorate the church. If you have any Christmas “goodies” left, bring them and “we’ll put up the coffee.”

BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

- **Sunday School** for children ages 3 through Grade 8 is held downstairs on Sunday mornings at 9:15. There are classes for ages 3 through Kindergarten, Grades 1-3 and Grades 4-8. *There will be no class on Sunday, January 1.*
- **An Adult Bible Class** is held during the Sunday School hour for parents to study the same lesson as their children. It meets upstairs in the back of the Nursery School. *This class will not meet on Sunday, January 1 either.*
- **Home Bible Studies** are studying the Book of Romans. Much of our theology and many of our beliefs are based upon this letter written by Paul. A group for our **Deaf** will meet Sunday, January 8, following worship. Another group will meet Sunday evening, January 15 at 7 in the **parsonage**, another group will meet Thursday evening, January 19 at 7:30 in the home of Shirley **Grenz**, and our newest group will meet in the home of Edwin and Lydia **Waluye** on Sunday afternoon, January 22 at 4. If you would like to join in on one of these groups, speak with Pastor, or if you want to host a new group, or be part of one that would meet here at church one day during the week, please speak with Pastor as well.
- **Men’s Bible Breakfast** meets at 8:30 in von Hall on Saturday, January 28 for a study of the **Ten Commandments**. We’re starting the 2nd Commandment. Cost for the freshly-prepared breakfast is a mere \$3.
- **Confirmation Instruction** for those in Grades 7-8 meets on Wednesday afternoons at 3.

CHOIR PRACTICE is held on Sunday mornings following 10:30 worship. Practice is in the sanctuary with the keyboard. Everyone is welcome. No choir experience is necessary, just a joy for singing.

OUR JANUARY MISSION OFFERING will be in support of the *Gateway Pregnancy Centers*. These are Christian centers that encourage moms to give birth to their children. The centers are located in Irvington, Elizabeth and Plainfield. *Rev. Dean Gavaris, the Executive Director*, will be our *Guest Speaker on Sunday, January 22* at both worship services. He will also speak in between the worship services. *The offering will be received that day.* If you prefer, or in addition to the offering, these centers are always in need of the following items...

- *Baby wipes*
- *Diapers, diaper rash cream, small diaper bags*
- *Tee shirts and baby sleepers (sizes up to 18 months)*
- *Baby bath towels, wash cloths, shampoo*
- *Bibs, bottles, teething rings, receiving blankets*

Did you know...

- Abortion is the Number One Killer of Children in the World.
- Worldwide 42 million babies are aborted annually.
- Worldwide 115,000 babies are aborted daily.
- In the U.S. alone, over 53 million babies have been aborted since 1973.

Rev. Dr. James Lamb, Executive Director of Lutherans for Life says, *“When we view abortion through the lens of our Christian faith, we do not see a moral issue that needs correcting or a political issue that needs strategizing. We see a spiritual issue that takes priority. The child in the womb belongs to God, formed by His hands and purchased by His blood. Abortion not only assaults human life, it assaults the Creator and Redeemer of human life.”*

*Pending the availability of cast and crew, we might have a **Dinner Theater** on **Saturday, January 28**. Try to keep the date open. We will finalize this one way or the other as soon as possible.*

THE SIGNUP SHEET for the weekly folding of our bulletins for January is on the Information Shelf. Volunteers will also be needed for the February newsletter. Thanks to all who have been helping out with this and making it work!

For anyone interested in sponsoring the **eternal light candle, the communion wine or the bulletin for dates in 2012**, forms are available at the Guest Register. Please refer to the 2012 Sponsorship Calendar posted in the narthex to see what dates are available, ***but do not write on it***. Give your completed form and payment to **Madeline Szeles**, or put it in her mailslot. **Dates will only be reserved upon receipt of payment.**

*We continue to sell **grocery cards** to A&P, Shop-Rite and Stop & Shop, at face value in amounts of \$20, \$25, \$50 and \$100. The church retains a percentage of the face value, but you get to spend the entire face value. This is a very simple way to help fund our mission and ministry as you go about buying your groceries. They are available on Sunday mornings as well as from Anita Brand during the week here at school or next door at the parsonage. Spread the word around that these are available. **Since starting this program, we've profited over \$10,000 towards the Mission and Ministry of Grace!** As of December 18 we've profited **\$1,297.75**.*

***"Adopt a Bill"** is another special way of supporting our Mission and Ministry. On the table across from von Hall are current bills showing the costs of doing our Mission and Ministry. "Adopt" one of these bills by taking the "bill" and placing it in the accompanying envelope, along with the bill amount, and place it in the offering plate. As of December 18 we've received **\$541.61** from this for this year.*

***"Thrivent Choice Dollars"** is a way for investors with Thrivent Financial for Lutherans to support various missions and ministries, among which are Grace, St. Matthew's and our school, without diminishing your investment. It's Thrivent's way, as a fraternal organization, to return some of its profits back to the church. As of November 20 we've received **\$1,897** from this for this year.*

***"75th Anniversary Fund"** has a goal of \$35,000. It will be used for various needed maintenance projects, deficit reduction, missions and potential upgrades. More information, pledge forms and envelopes are available on the table and bulletin board across from von Hall. As of December 23 we've received **\$2,498.50 in pledges and \$950.50 in receipts**.*

THE SCHEDULE for our Greeters, Ushers, Acolytes, Lay Readers and Servers is on the backside of the monthly calendar. *Please refer to this as individual copies are not placed in your mailslots.*

We continue to collect food for both the **food pantry** at Connecticut Farms Presbyterian Church, as well as the Union Township Food Pantry. Place any food in, or by, the basket underneath the Information Shelf. The greatest need is for basic food items like pasta, pasta sauce, tuna, cereal, peanut butter, jelly, crackers, canned soup, canned fruit and vegetables, baked beans, and macaroni and cheese.

Jeff Grunder continues to give Grace a flat fee for used **toner cartridges**, as well as any **cell phones**, which you no longer are using. Please place these items in the box provided under the information shelf. Jeff will collect these items on a regular basis. All donations are greatly appreciated. This again is another easy way to support the mission and ministry of Grace.

*To keep you informed on a weekly basis of what's happening here at Grace, we send out a weekly group e-mail. This group e-mail, along with our computer caller, is also used to send out other pertinent information regarding events and happenings as they occur. If we don't have your e-mail address, please submit it to Pastor at **gracelu4u@yahoo.com**. This is another means we have to keep everyone informed. Don't leave yourself out!*

If anyone is ever interested in **piano lessons**, our Music Director, Gary Lewis, is available to teach in your home, his or here at church. Speak to him if interested. You can call him at home at 908-272-5399 or on his cell phone at 973-590-9294.

HE FAILETH NOT

Each happy morn when I awake,

This promise I take:

“I'll never leave thee, nor forsake.”

He faileth not!

Along life's road I'll fear no ill,
For Christ, my Lord is with me still;

He never faileth! He never will!

He faileth not!

He has not failed me in the past,
He will not fail while life shall last,
For wheresoe'er my lot be cast;

He faileth not!

Report from St. Matthew's Lutheran Church for the Deaf

I have decided to take some lines from my articles of years before for this month because they cover the same subject for this New Year that is coming soon.

It is hard to believe that the old year of 2011 is passing away so fast and that another New Year is coming in before we know it! The Bible says in the Book of Peter, that a thousand years is with us, but it is like a day to the Lord God. So time means nothing to Him! This period of a thousand years seems so long to us and we are too obsessed with the keeping of time and we often look at our watches and clocks – even those digital ones in our modern times – to keep our appointments and schedules on time. Sometimes we complain that time seems to pass slowly when we don't like to do something in our lives or find it boring. But it does pass quickly when we like to do something interesting and happy with our pleasures and activities of all kinds. Amazing but true, this perspective of time held by us mortal humans with our small minds and narrow understandings compared to that of the Lord God. Who is awesome with His knowing all things in the past, present and future!

We would like to report that Carl Philip Ekstrom one of the original members of our church in Newark, New Jersey, as his name was mentioned in the 25th year booklet of the Saint Matthew's Lutheran Church for the Deaf in Newark, authored by Pastor Gerhold in the year 1962 – this Philip has passed away peacefully at his daughter's home Saturday, December 3rd, 2011 – We attended the funeral services for him at the Higgins and Bonner Echo Lake Funeral Home in Westfield near the border with Springfield. He was buried besides his wife Esther Mary who had passed away a few years before in December 2004 at the Hollywood Memorial Park in Union, NJ.

We are looking forward to this 75th Anniversary celebration of both of our churches with various activities each time through this coming New Year of 2012!

I would like to say our greetings for a Happy and healthy New Year for you, our readers! We are looking forward to working and celebrating with your Grace church in many things for the glory of the LORD God in this coming New Year!

*- Submitted by
Deacon Richard Windisch, Sr.*

DO YOU HAVE ADDRESSES FOR ANY OF THE FOLLOWING?
(If so, please submit to the church office)

Baptism

Heather Tabbia
 Stephanie Lenart
 Kimberly McCall
 Richard Incorvia
 Heather Biddulph
 Jeanine Roy

Confirmation

Peter Diehl

Baptism

Philip Markowski
 Christopher Mallon
 Susan Gilbert
 Glenn Schick
 Douglas Petkoski

Confirmation

Jo-Anne Kappesser
 Deborah Muha

Baptism

Emily Selden
 Andrea Runne
 Victoria Clauss
 Andrea Johnson

Baptism

Matthew Biddulph
 Stephanie Foundos
 Erik Stenzel
 Mark Stenzel
 Lee Helle

Baptism

Robby Kuhrt
 Richard Riedlinger

Baptism

Jennifer Crawford
 Vanessa Merlo

Marriage

Kenneth Polnik & Margaret Infanti
 William Trahman & Jean Heany
 William Uellner & Denise Plunkett
 Gary Anderson & Johanna Connolly
 John Stenzel & Eleanor Miller

Deanna Schwab

1981**Marriage**

Joseph Santillo & Diane Zeltner
 Mark Bernstein & Mary Rittershofer
 William Dunn & Christine Grimes

1982**Marriage**

John Dendanto & Rita Jones
 Joseph Rubel & Lorraine D'Alessandro

1983**Confirmation**

Christina Mantey

1984**Marriage**

Jerry Albers & Dawn Hamann

1985**Marriage**

Patsy Veltre & Gail Adrion

Ray Mattia
Danielle Burkhardt

Baptism

Glenn Caprio
Jamie Lanier
Mark Lockwood

Baptism

Erich Gehring

Baptism

Jason Murphy
Tara Murphy
Jeffery Maclver
Justin Albers
Christopher Cirillo

Baptism

Katherine Bloodgood
Kelly Ransdell
Matthew Mattia
Joshua Batista
Nicholas Giamo
Steven and Danielle Simone

Confirmation

Scott Fischer

1986**Marriage**

William Giamo & Annette Mennillo

Confirmation

Cathy Boegner

1987**Marriage**

Martin Yeager & Barbara Nicol

1988**Marriage**

James Burke & Debra Rustick
Harry Bloodgood & Constance Madison

Confirmation

Donna Mann
Doris Mann

1989**Marriage**

Michael Zwier & Rita Albers
Ores Pacholczuk & Antonia Muniz

According to our church records, these are the Baptisms, Confirmations and Marriages that took place at Grace during the years of 1980-1989, for whom we have no addresses. There are others for whom we have addresses. This is the group that we would like to honor on Sunday, March 18 as part of our 75th Anniversary. If you have addresses for any of these individuals, please forward them to the church office by Sunday, February 12, so that we have sufficient time to get an invitation out to them.

