



Grace Lutheran Church
46 Woodland Street
Hartford, CT 06105



Our Staff and Council Leadership

The Rev. Rick Kremer, Pastor
rickkremer@aol.com
Nilda Bolorin, Parish Administrator
officeatgrace@sbcglobal.net
Dorothea Glatte, Lay Minister
Lloyd Smith, Lay Minister
Louisa Barton-Duguay, Religious Worker
Artist in Residence for Outreach

Barbara Ruhe, President
Barbara Calogero, Secretary
Dale Eberhardt, Treasurer
Janice Potter, Financial Assistant
Dale Eberhardt, Organist
Walter Scott, Sexton

www.graceistheplace.org



GRACE NOTES

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH, 46 WOODLAND STREET, HARTFORD, CT 06105 860-527-7792

November 2019

We Who believe in freedom cannot rest

We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes

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Twenty-five Grace-connected people represented our church at the birthing of the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance on October 28th at Central Connecticut State University. The event was an electric gathering of more than 35 religious congregations from all faiths to work together to bring justice, fairness and decency to the Greater Hartford Community. The Hartford Courant's reporter Rebecca Lurye, said, that "community organizers and faith leaders launched a series of social justice campaigns... asking elected officials across the Greater Hartford region to help them dismantle racism in schools, end a state practice of treating welfare benefits like lifelong loans, and (to) bring a charitable pharmacy to the capital city."

The organization has been building over a period of three years, getting to know one another, studying how change happens, and discovering their strength as a whole, and its potential impact for good in the city. "A Hartford-based nonprofit formerly called the Christian Activities Council," an organization that worked hand in hand with Grace for years, as now morphed into the Center for Leadership and Justice.



The reality is that Hartford faces huge challenges and needs the wherewithal to come together and work on the most difficult of these – like racism, slum-lord housing, violence, unjust incarceration of people of color and outrageous programs and policies that impact on the most vulnerable, the poor and elderly.

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The Pastor’s Message-November 2019

October Ended with Silent Prayer and a Boom!

Three years of incubation ended on October 28, 2019 when the GREATER HARTFORD INTERFAITH ACTION ALLIANCE was formally created out of the womb of the communities we serve and with many, many congregations of all faiths who stood up together and said, “Enough!” We can no longer allow the City of Hartford and its poor, oppressed and frightened inhabitants to continue their spiral down. We have come together to address the big issues not as individual congregations but as people of faith, of all faiths. Our cover story tries to bring everyone there, where 25 or so people from Grace joined the festivities and the commitments to bring about change.

After the end of a special time away, and the celebration of a life milestone thanks to my loving wife, we talked about prayer on a Sunday. Do we pray enough? Do we know how to pray? Can we say the right words? Are we insistent and the squeaking wheel such that God will indeed hear our prayers and give us the peace and hope that we so desperately need in this very difficult time in history. You may see a few small messages in this month’s Grace Notes that suggest that God is witness and we are thankful.

You see as we were on vacation we let go of the Emails and phone calls and looked instead at beautiful cathedrals and churches, gorgeous lakes, and people living more joyfully even though they are part of the same world that we are. The music, the food, the landscapes and the sunsets... all helped us to pray in a small church as four Jesuit monks worship. And then there was La Scala and the third largest church in the world, both in Milan.



We returned thinking of other things... our friends, our church, our family, our dog... and prayer. The need to pray more to look to God more and to trust and believe that we are being heard, embraced and loved. We pray for Mavis and Lloyd, for Edith and Guenther, with the hope that they may gain in strength and hope. We pray for all of the Saints that have come in through our doors and into our hearts.

We are hoping to worship with the three congregations at Grace on the fifth Sunday in December, we are thrilled by the building improvements that are happening before our eyes by a loving craftsman. We look to the future of our Fresh Start enterprise and think of other ways that we can welcome and care for those who come to be with us in this community and our church. We look forward to what it means to step forward with others and demand that things be done with justice and love in our communities, our State and our country. . . And finally, we realize that without each other we might not be sharing the joy of our lives, too, with the sure knowledge that we are not alone. And the one who is not as visible is in charge... not us.

QUINCY IS ALIVE AND WELL!

Nilda screamed, Walter gasped in disbelief, and the Pastor, well he’s too old for this kind of stuff! Yes, there is a Quincy... the picture tells a thousand words. Note that he is in great shape, and already giving Walter a hard-time!



Using a picture or beautiful graphic of “praying hands” –

Lou Oliver shared with me some words from a book she is reading, Lysa Terkeurst, "It's Not Supposed to Be This Way". It states, "God loves me too much to answer my prayers at any other time than the right time and in any other way than the right way". Amen
Add that to our conversations about prayer...

November Birthdays 2019

Allen Redding	03-Nov
Wendella Colbert	10-Nov
Jayden McAdams	11-Nov
Natalie Dugan	20-Nov
Dominick Mathura	20-Nov
Hazel Abrom	22-Nov
Barbara Ruhe	25-Nov
David Eberly	26-Nov
Bodo Jahn	28-Nov
Felicite Yigle-Kaljob	28-Nov
Marion St. Germain	30-Nov

May you all be blessed as you celebrate your special days!

Did we miss your birthday or anniversary?
Contact the office,
860-527-7792
or email
officeatgrace@sbcglobal.net
to update our records.

GIVING BACK FOR LIFE

Lee Whittemore is a blessed member of Grace Lutheran Church. Well, he doesn't attend the Friday Gatherings or most worship services, but I know he has attend a few. He has other things on his mind and heart. God's there, to be sure, but he has a number of missions that he simply does, without notice (sometimes), but with genuine love and commitment. You see, Lee has been with AA for more than a couple of weeks, and he has a deep knowledge of the "book", the stages, the distractions and the challenges. He has committed himself to help others discover what he's learned. He has sponsored a few people in his time, and they have come to love him for it.

But, too, Lee responds to requests for help from most everybody... even when Louisa asked him if he could build benches in the backyard of the church so people might be able sit and talk somewhere without being bothered or challenged. He said, "sure", something he says nearly all of the time in his life. And when the homeless guys came by and watched him and asked if they could help, he said, "sure." And when a pastor learned of what he had done and asked if he thought this could be a business, he said, "sure." And, he supervised, taught, supervised, dealt with me, created each product out of his head and creative mind... and, Fresh Start was born.

Now at 80, he has begun making changes to our old church which needs to much attention. So, he started fixing plumbing, floors, uncovered a fireplace, fixed leaks in the kitchen, repainted our signs, installed solar spotlights to throw light on the church sign at night, and it goes on, and on, and on.... You see, he kept saying, "sure."



He is a gift of God to most people he meets and he has been a gift of God to me and our church. It's one of the ways the Holy Spirit is present with us... she comes in the form of this handsome, life worn old guy, whose gifts are legend and whose spirit teaches, encourages and brings joy. Janet's Closet, wrought iron painting, glass repairs, it goes on. Thanks, Lee. We love you.

WE'VE LOST A GIANT!

In October, one of the giants of our time succumbed and left us, even as he was engaged in dealing with the behavior of our current president, who threatened the very things that Elijah Cummings lived and fought for... his country and those in it who were suffering,



ignored or vulnerable. He was a champion for the downtrodden wherever they might be, and particularly in the community he served for a good part of his life, South Baltimore. Some people have a way with words that they can say what is hard to say, what is deeply true and what says what needs to be said.

President Barack Obama gave the eulogy at Representative Cummings' funeral. Here are some of the highlights of his message:

- Elijah's example: a son of parents who rose from nothing to carve out just a little something, a public servant who toiled to guarantee the least of us have the same opportunities that he had earned. A leader who once said he would die for his people, even as he lived every minute for them – his live validates the things we tell ourselves about what's possible in this country. Not guaranteed, but possible.
- The possibility that our destinies are not pre-ordained. But, rather through our works, and our dedication and our willingness to open our hearts to God's message of love for all people, we can live a purposeful life. That we can reap a bountiful harvest.
- That we are neither sentenced to wither among the rocks nor assured a bounty, but we have a capacity, the chance, as individuals and as a nation , to root ourselves in good soil.
- Elijah understood that. That's why he fought for justice. That's why he embraced his beloved community in Baltimore. That's why he went on to fight for the rights and opportunities of forgotten people all across America, not just in his district. He was never complacent, for he knew that without clarity of purpose and a steadfast faith, and the dogged determination demanded by our liberty, the promise of this nation can wither. Complacency, he knew, was not only corrosive for our collective lives, but for our individual lives.

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WE WHO BELIEVE IN FREEDOM CANNOT REST WE WHO BELIEVE IN FREEDOM CANNOT REST UNTIL IT COMES

(continued from page 1)

Our Bishop, Jim Hazelwood, the Mayor of the City of Hartford and a host of state politicians were in attendance all lauding the new organization and agreeing to support its initial initiatives that will be undertaken. A large number of Lutheran congregations were present and our Bishop offered to match congregational contributions with \$20,000 of Synod funds.

Go GHIAA! God! We are with you!



WE'VE LOST A GIANT!

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- There's some people, they have that deep baritone, a prophetic voice. And when it was good times and we achieved victories together, that voice and that laugh was a gift. But you needed it more during the tough times, when the path ahead looked crooked, when obstacles abounded. When I entertained doubts, or I saw those who were in the fight start to waver, that's when Elijah's voice mattered most.
- Elijah Cummings was a man of noble and good heart. His parents and his faith planted the seeds of hope, and love, and compassion, and righteousness in that good soil of his. He has harvested all the crops that he could, for the Lord has now called Elijah home, to give his humble, faithful servant rest. And, it now falls on us to continue his work, so that other young boys and girls in Baltimore, across Maryland, across the United States, and around the world might too have a chance to grow and to flourish.
- That's how we will honor him. That's how we will remember him. That's what he would hope for. May God bless the memory of the very honorable Elijah Cummings. And, may God bless this city, and this state and this nation that he loved.

A WONDERFUL DAY – FILLED WITH GRATITUDE

Everybody doesn't have the blessing of a birthday party when they get older. First of all, we don't want to remember how old we are, beyond a certain point. Secondly, it feels somewhat awkward to ask people to come some place to celebrate your life. My lovely and wonderful wife took care of all that. She simply made it happen and I was thrilled.

Thanks to everyone who came, and thank God for the blessings that keep coming our way. The biggest of those is the woman who made the birthday happen and has shared her life with me, Rick, Jr. and David for more time than we have all deserved.

Thanks to Fresh Start (and Louisa) for a beautiful bench that was given to me with a beautifully presented picture of our glorious church. Facebook generated 3,800 likes after a picture was posted. How about that?

As you get older, celebrate... it is a lot of fun!

