



Grace Lutheran Church
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www.graceistheplace.org



GRACE NOTES

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

October 2019

CELEBRATING THE WAY GRACE IS, WAS AND ALWAYS WILL BE!



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On Tuesday, August 27th 42 volunteers attended our Christmas in August celebration to give thanks to the dozens of people who have provided help to the church in one way or another. Given that Fresh Start Pallet Products, Inc. is no longer under the 501c3 of Grace, we could have easily doubled the number we invited had we recognized that we still treat this wondrous initiative as a ministry of this church. The 42 were people who help the church in almost too many ways to count.

There are those who serve the community every Friday for our Friday Gathering, the chefs, the people who serve, the people who prepare the space, clean the space, set up the meal, get the food, sort the food as it comes in from multiple sources, the people who count and register, the people who come from other churches to support this initiative and people who entertain, provide information, take pictures, give haircuts, etc.

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The Pastor's Message-October 2019

This issue is admittedly short, but hopefully still of value to everybody. You see, Judy and I are taking time off for a vacation, having done that for four days in February. What I continue to learn is how important it is for all of us to take some time off, rest and reflect. Just as it is for me, it is for you. Take the time you need. Take care of yourself. That actually needs to come first, or else, it becomes harder and harder to be there for others. Grace is all about others.

I share an anecdote about taking time off. Having worked with hardly taking any time off, save for health, Walter has not taken vacation time. So, he finally decides he is going to take some time off and gives me a letter with the dates plainly indicated. HE IS GOING ON VACATION. Somehow, I continued to bump into Walter at Grace during his vacation. He'd say, well I was resting and remembered.... And thought I'd just get that done and leave. But, sometimes, he didn't... leave, that is. Walter is a wonderful model of a committed, decent person trying to help others. He is a terrible model of how one should take care of himself, and celebrate the Sabbath and take time off. We're working on Walter... maybe he'll learn.

At the tail end of August we really joyfully celebrated all of the volunteers that were part of us this year and last. We argue that without those folks we would not have been able to do God's work at Grace. These folks from both inside and out of Grace have made all the difference and their positive spirits lift us up and keep us going. All hail to all our volunteers and for all those members who continue to give all they can to Grace.

Pastor Alba Perez celebrated the 26th year of her ordination on the 19th of September. She joined me in presiding at Communion on the following Sunday and several of her Latina friends came, too. She is working on a Bible Study program at Grace in Spanish... we met several of her Bible Study people on that Sunday. And, we closed out September with another of our fifth Sunday collaborations with First Calvary Church as we worshiped together yesterday, the 29th. We started with an upbeat version of *On the Battlefield*, which was somewhat different from that which was in our hymnals and bulletins (oh, well!) When we are together with our brothers and sisters from First Calvary I feel a strong sense of common purpose, energy and love. That was, once again, the case as William from First Calvary kept saying at the end, we've got to do this again. Yes, we have to do this again. We will invite CT Myanmar Baptist to join us the next time... Pastor Derrick's thought at the end.

We will be gone for about 12 days, and will be thinking of all of you as we seek respite. This is in many ways the most beautiful time of the year for New England. Enjoy the beauty all around you, particularly the wonderful people that are here, worship here and volunteer here.

PASTOR ALBA PEREZ – 9/19/93

On September 22, 2019 we celebrated Alba's 26th year since her ordination as a Lutheran Pastor. It is important that we reflect on the years that a pastor has committed her/his life to the ministry of the church. Darrell Urban will complete 47 years in ministry on October 15th and I will complete my 11th year on October 26th. Several potential members of Grace's Spanish speaking congregation came to celebrate her anniversary and a number of people from our Friday Gathering team came, too. Congratulations, Pastor Urban and Pastor Perez.



October Birthdays 2019

Gladys Jackson	10/2
Mavis Smith	10/3
Joycelyn Agyemang	10/5
Sherri Brown	10/5
Ty-rese Merrill	10/8
Cathy Tomlinson	10/10
Cynthia Jones	10/13
Miles Edward Abrom	10/15
Richard Kremer	10/21
Gretchen Unfried	10/22
Jocelyn Hill	10/24
Ryan Wellington	10/25
Akeva Koulla	10/26
Anna-Marie Potter	10/30

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

Happy Anniversary!

Rudolph & Rebecca Lewis	10/4
Catherine & Jerrold Abrom	10/10
Herbert & Anne Reiher	10/12

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

ANOTHER FIFTH SUNDAY

We had another of our Fifth Sunday services joining with Fresh Calvary Church at 11:00 am. Dr. King said that Sundays were too often the most segregated day of the week. Both congregations seem to enjoy worshiping together, and I know I enjoy doing the sermon with Pastor Holloway. What is interesting is that we have not done anything in preparing for our joint sermon, we know the scripture and we can simply talk about what it means to us and invite folks to agree, comment or disagree. This Sunday we had some of the best of the music that each congregation enjoys and ended with *Oh When the Saints Come Marching In*. There is a distinct difference in the music we typically use during worship and Calvary's favorites, yet I find the passion and beat of their singing a match for our own slower and sometimes more complex, melodic pieces. Both are good when it comes to worshiping God. And, we all trust in, love, believe in and try to follow that very same God. Check out the pictures... you can see how much we enjoy being together...



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

"There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus"
(Galatians 3:28).

"Racism — a mix of power, privilege, and prejudice — is sin, a violation of God's intention for humanity" (Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture, 1993 <https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Race-Ethnicity-and-Culture>).

Dear Church,

Centered in Christ, the 2019 Churchwide Assembly was significant in many ways: worship, thoughtful deliberation and prayer led to the adoption of memorials and resolutions that will shape this church for years to come. Among these decisions, this church was called to address the deadly power of racism and white supremacy. Martin Luther's clear exposition of the gospel — that God justifies, that we are redeemed by the death and resurrection of Jesus, and that grace is a gift — not only makes it possible to engage in this work but gives us a framework in which to do it. The doctrine of justification is a great leveler. It acknowledges that no one group of people can claim supremacy over others. We are all deeply in need of grace, and God gives this gift to all. Standing equally under the judgement and promise of the gospel, we, as a church, can recognize the overt and covert ways that a culture of white supremacy denies full humanity to all people, and we can work to dismantle it.

- We offered a public apology titled "Declaration of the ELCA to People of African Descent." In the context of the quadricentennial remembrance of American slavery in this country, we acknowledge that racism and white supremacy are deeply rooted in that history, and that the church is complicit. This apology "means working toward a deeper understanding of slavery and its legacy, of institutional and structural racism, of white privilege, and of attitudes and foundations of white supremacy." It was accepted by the African Descent Lutheran Association with a call to accountability. You can watch the video here and utilize this explanation as a resource. In June the Council of the Lutheran World Federation, our global communion, also adopted a resolution commemorating the quadricentennial.
- We adopted a resolution condemning white supremacy. Through study, prayer and action, we call "all congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to engage in communal study of the structures and rhetoric that empower and fuel racism and white supremacy and to take to heart the teaching of Scriptures, so we may all be better equipped to speak boldly about the equal dignity of all persons in the eyes of God." Whether our churches and communities are racially diverse or predominantly white, this is work for all of us. We have several existing racial justice resources *available to support this work*.
- We adopted a resolution to establish June 17 as "Emanuel 9 Day of Repentance," commemorating the martyrdom of Clementa C. Pinckney, Cynthia Marie Graham-Hurd, Susie Jackson, Ethel Lee Lance, Depayne Middleton-Doctor, Tywanza Sanders, Daniel L. Simmons, Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, and Myra Thompson by a violent white supremacist, Dylann Roof, who grew up in the ELCA.

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CELEBRATING THE WAY GRACE IS, WAS AND ALWAYS WILL BE!

(continued from page 1)

There are the people from Grace who prepare us for worship, taking care of the sanctuary, taking care of the altar, the elements, the baptismal fonts, the selection of music, the playing of music, the people who provide hospitality after worship, or during special occasions, those who care for our building, making repairs, taking care of the bathrooms, keeping everything as clean as possible given the large flow of people we have coming into the church every week.

Writing and preparing bulletins, Grace Notes, Spirit of Grace messages and building a new directory, helping people who come to the church every day and interfacing with the three congregations currently worshipping in our building.



We didn't know how many would come to the celebration which was planned for January and delivered in August (I know, sometimes our Grace Notes are late, too.) But, that's not what is important. What is, is that we ultimately do it and do it well with the help of all of you who care

about our ministries and the people we serve. This church has a history of being there for people new to the community, immigrants, refugees and people of all faiths and beliefs. We respect and love all who come here and we do our very best to serve them.

Our church is shrinking as our services are growing. God's work is being done with an ever increasing number of hands. We had a great lunch at the Hibachi Grille with lots of fun and laughter. Please join me in appreciating every single person who has come to be with us, to help us, to guide us and to be with us in serving our communities. BTW, there were more than 42 people invited. With the few gifts left at the end, we gave them to Guenther Mamet, and others who were not able to get there.

**GRACE IS THE PLACE. GOD IS HERE.
WE ARE BLESSED!**



ELCA—RACISM AND WHITE SUPREMACY

(continued from page 3)

The resolution calls for June 17 as a day of repentance, grounded in prayer; worship resources are currently in development. It also calls for deepening conversations with the African Methodist Episcopal Church on matters of racism and white supremacy, and building upon the long-standing relations between our two churches. A letter I received from the senior episcopal leadership of the African Methodist Episcopal Council of Bishops noted that "Martin Luther was the 'Great Reformer.' Richard Allen started the AME Church to reform the racially divided American Christianity he experienced in his lifetime. It is appropriate that Churches birthed by these two persons who sought more authentic and true expressions of Christianity engage in conversations that will lead to 21st Century reform, justice, and reconciliation." In response, I have acknowledged the significance of their willingness to engage in deeper conversations with us, as an affirmation of our striving to be accountable in and through authentic relationships. I shared my hope that our talks since 2015, as well as previous rounds of dialogue between our two churches, will enable us to develop new models that move us from dialogue to diapraxis, or dialogue in action, for the sake of our witness to our unity in Christ in these divisive and deadly times. As you think about possibilities in your local context, I commend to you the congregational resource we co-published in 1996, "Understanding One Another."

These recent developments build upon the continuous work we are doing as the ELCA and in ecumenical partnership. Through bilateral work, such as our joint Statement of Mission with the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and in councils and coalitions, especially the National Council of Churches and its A.C.T. Now to End Racism initiative and the cross-racial dialogue of the Conference of National Black Churches, we are doubling down on our work, witness and advocacy with other Christians against racism and white supremacy.

You, in congregations and synods, are identifying new and renewed possibilities for engaging in this difficult but life-giving work and witness. We take the next steps together assured that there is no longer that which divides us, for we are one in Christ Jesus.

In peace,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop, ELCA
<https://www.elca.org/News-and-Events/8005>

About the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

The ELCA is one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States, with nearly 3.5 million members in more than 9,100 worshipping communities across the 50 states and in the Caribbean region. Known as the church of "God's work. Our hands," the ELCA emphasizes the saving grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ, unity among Christians and service in the world. The ELCA's roots are in the writings of the German church reformer Martin Luther.

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