



The Grace Vine

A Publication of Grace Lutheran Church

Chester, VA

November 2010

Pastor's Ponderings



How's your blood pressure? Is it inching up as we stand at the precipice of what has come to be known as "The Holiday Season"? Are you approaching this weekend with a mixture of anticipation and dread, knowing that amidst all the celebration and good will, there will be crowds, traffic, frayed tempers, mounting pressure and the spending of obscene amounts of cash?

I admit to severe ambivalence about the approaching month, my 62nd "Holiday Season." It contains two wonderful holidays and is one of the most deeply spiritual times of the year, when even those who don't give God much of a thought during the rest of the year find their thoughts turning heavenward. But the way we try to cram so much celebrating into such a short time span generates lots of anxiety and stress.

And at the center of it lies a baby. Those of you who remember the '60's, will remember a statement that was popular then: "Keep the faith, baby!", coined by Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. to encourage his supporters during his congressional investigation.

As you move through this delightful, stressful, busy, demanding portion of the year, I would suggest that you keep in mind a slightly altered version of that rallying cry of the '60's: "Keep the Baby – and faith!"

Keep the Baby – the Lord Jesus, the Incarnate Son of God, God in human form, the

great incarnational miracle of Christmas – at the center of all you do. As the politicians are fond of saying, "It's about the economy!", so remember that in this season, "It's about the Baby!"

In that Baby, our Savior, is the only hope for humankind, the only redemption of humanity. There are not many ways to God, and all roads do not lead to God. There is one way, He who is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life – the Baby.

It is faith in that Baby that offers us eternal life alone. And while the miracle at Bethlehem is important, never forget that it is what that Baby did later that is most important. He is the One who grew to manhood and brought God's Word and healing to the world. It is the adult Jesus who died on a cross, standing in our place, taking our punishment, defeating death by His death, proclaiming His victory in His resurrection. In Him we have the assurance of eternal life by faith.

So, as you purchase presents, as you decorate your tree, as you wrap gifts, and mail cards and prepare dinners and travel to relatives and endure office parties, remember, above all things:

"Keep the Baby – and faith!"

Best wishes for a Christ-centered Christmas,
Pastor



IN LOVING



MEMORY

† Rita Ferguson †

Our sister in faith, Rita Ferguson, wife of Jack Ferguson, entered into her eternal rest Tuesday, November 23, 2010 after suffering a stroke and heart attack. Our grief is tempered by our knowledge that she is with our Lord, who has prepared a room for her in His mansion in heaven. Rita's desire was to be cremated and her cremains interred at Grace. We will hold a celebration of her life and God's promises on Saturday, Dec. 4, 11:00 AM, with interment in the garden and a reception in the Fellowship Hall immediately following.



The Shepherd's Center of Chesterfield is in urgent need of volunteer drivers to drive seniors to their critical doctors, pharmaceutical pick-up and grocery shopping, so they can maintain an independent lifestyle.

We need your help. Currently we are placing new clients calling into the Shepherd's Center on a waiting list because we do not have enough volunteer drivers to serve the growing need in our community.

Please volunteer today and change a senior's life in need. Please call (804) 706-9198 for more information to serve our seniors.



Advent Evening Services
December 1st, 8th, and 15th
7:00pm
Soup Suppers 6:16pm

Christmas Eve
December 24th
6:30pm and 11:00pm
Holy Communion at both services

Christmas Day
December 25th
11:00am
Holy Communion

New Year's Eve
December 31st
6:30pm
Holy Communion

*Christ
IS Born!*

Family Life

What the Donkey Saw (by U.A. Fanthorpe)

No room in the inn, of course,
And not that much in the stable
What with the shepherds, Magi, Mary,
Joseph, the heavenly host-
Not to mention the baby
Using our manger as a cot.
You couldn't have squeezed another cherub in
For love or money.

Still, in spite of the overcrowding,
I did my best to make them feel wanted.
I could see the baby and I
Would be going places together.

Recommended children's books:

*The Small One by Alex Walsh

*Why a Donkey was Chosen by Christopher Gregorowski

*The Donkey's Christmas Song by Nancy Tafari

These books can be found at the Chesterfield-County library.

Pat LaLonde
Family Life



Yes, we're headed back to the coast, this time to Nashville, TN. Okay, so it's not exactly the coast you were thinking of, but they did have a lot of flooding, and there is much to be done by a motivated volunteer force.

The dates are 13-20 February 2011. We tentatively slated to stay at the Rau-wood Retreat

is operated by The Nashville Lutherans, Inc., and currently being used as one of two base camps by Lutheran Disaster Response.

Cost for the trip is \$120 donation to the GLC Gulf Coast Mission Fund. Details and registration forms. Want to get everyone signed up by 2 January. Call Pete Adler, 768-4730 for information

The holiday season is upon us again! We have many festive services and fellowship opportunities ahead. Please join your family at Grace for as many as you can. It will make your Advent and Christmas so much more meaningful.



I hope you had an opportunity in November to hear our newest musical group share their skills playing our lovely hand chimes. The "Happy Clappers" played in worship for the first time on November 14 at the 10:45 service. They were nervous, but played well. One of our group mentioned that she felt like she was "getting smarter" through playing hand chimes. She said her "brain was working better." She has discovered the scientific fact that learning a musical instrument improves brain function in children and adults. Using our brains and bodies keeps us healthy. As we approach the closing days of 2010, perhaps you can make a resolution for 2011 and "become smarter" by joining one of our musical groups. In addition to having a great time learning something new with some fabulous Grace friends, your brain and body will be stimulated. Another one of our Happy Clappers mentioned that our hour rehearsal is the "fastest hour of her week."

Talk to me this month about joining our Happer Clappers, Joyful Noise or Adult Choir in 2011. Share our joy! Blessings this Holy Season:

Sue Gamber, Music Director
320-1822 or gammersu@aol.com



If you know any woman currently undergoing chemotherapy, please pass the word to her that there is a cleaning service that provides FREE housecleaning - once per month for 4 months while she is in treatment. All she has to do is sign up and have her doctor fax a note confirming the treatment. Cleaning for a Reason will have a participating maid service in her zip code area arrange for the service. This organization serves the entire USA and currently has 547 partners to help these women. It's our job to pass the word and let them know that there are people out there that care. There are two maid services in the Chesterfield area. Be a blessing to someone and pass this information along.

<http://www.cleaningforareason.org/>

Noelle Reese



We filled 25 "shoe boxes" for Operation Christmas with the Samaritan's Purse. People included toys, books, school supplies, and more for children of all ages. Thank you Grace!

We filled 52 "meal" bags and donated \$1,390 to help feed Chesterfield and Colonial Heights

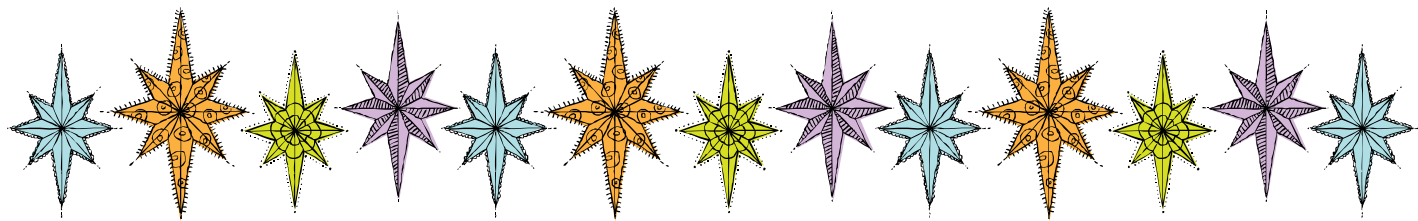
Dinner for Eight



It's time to assemble our Spring 2011 Dinner for Eight groups. Dinner for Eight is a small group comprised of four couples assigned together for a four month period. Once a month they meet for a meal (dinner, lunch, brunch or other activity) and fellowship. Please consider joining if you have not done so already. Singles are welcome! It's a lot of fun and a great way to get to know other members of Grace. If you'd like to join, contact Peggy Gordon at 748-4801 or email: pkkgordon@gmail.com. Current participants will automatically be included in the Spring session.



Mark your calendars now for 7pm on January 3, 2011 for an Altar Guild meeting. The meeting will be held in the fellowship hall. All are invited to come. If you have any questions, please contact Ruth Bowling at 919-2532 or rick-ruth@comcast.net





December is a month of giving and receiving. It all started with God's greatest gift of sending His only-begotten Son on that first Christmas to be our Savior and Lord. John 3:16 (NIV) says it so clearly: **"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life."** The Apostle John states in his first letter: **"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" (1 John 3:1 NIV)**

As the Holy Spirit helps us to grow each day as the children of God, we also grow in our loving and giving, because loving and giving are two important characteristics of our God. Just like children imitate their parents, so we also are to imitate God. God delights in loving and giving. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments give overwhelming evidence of this truth. Jesus taught that **"it is more blessed to give than to receive."** (Acts 20:35 NIV)

Where do you find yourself this December as it relates to loving and giving? Many Christians experience how true these words of Jesus really are. In this season of giving and receiving where do you find your greater joy? Is it in giving or in receiving? Are you among those people who get more joy and excitement from searching for and finding the right gifts for the special people in their lives? Many Christians really do enjoy giving more than receiving.

During this season of giving and receiving take some time to reflect on the words of Jesus that **"it is more blessed to give than to receive"** and pray for the Holy Spirit's power to grow in the grace of giving. And may that giving be more than just selecting gifts for those you love. May that giving extend to supporting the work of the Lord through your church and other charitable organizations as you give generously of your

time, abilities and financial resources to bring the love of Jesus into the lives of others.

Merry Christmas and may this Christmas be a time of joy as you reflect on the greatest gift of all—God's only begotten Son to be your Savior. And in appreciation of and response to that best gift of all may you also experience the truth that it is really more blessed to give than to receive.



A recent daily devotion from the Lutheran Hour website was entitled "Share Your Story." It referenced St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 9: 19-23 which describes St. Paul witnessing to others. His goal was to win as many souls as possible. While doing so he said he became a Jew to win Jews, to those under the law he became like one under the law, to those not under the law he became like one not under the law, and to win the weak he became weak. Paul became all things to all men so that by all possible means he might save some. In other words, St. Paul talked to folks of all backgrounds and conditions in ways each c o u l d u n d e r s t a n d .

Each of us has our own personal story to tell as to why we are walking with the Lord. While the heart of our messages is all basically the same, each delivery style and story will be different depending on who we are and who we are talking to. A favorite hymn of mine is titled "I Love To Tell The Story." Each of us should want to tell our story of Jesus love to those who will listen.

I pray that each of us can talk about Jesus love for us all in a way that others can understand. Then it's up to the Holy Spirit if they are going to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Colossians 3:17 reminds us "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." To God be the glory great things He hath done. Let's think about it!

Grace Lutheran Church
Chester, Virginia

Lisa Neal
Youth Director

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH NEWS



MSM and HH Meetings

The HSYG meeting will be December 5th at 9:30 and the MSYG meeting will be December 12th at 9:30 in the youth room.

Please note: High School Happening and Middle School Madness are suspended during Advent so that everyone participates in the Wednesday night Advent services. We will, however, have the youth Christmas parties.

Be sure to visit the youth page on the new church website. The website also has a link to our Facebook page, where you can also see photos of our retreats and activities. Our Facebook page is open, so you don't have to actually be on Facebook to see our page---Just click on the link. If you are on Facebook, the group name is "Grace Lutheran Church Youth Group". Feel free to join our group!



Clothing Drive



Wow! Thank you so much for your outpouring of support for the gently used clothing ministry that the youth is partnering in. The amount of clothing we collected was probably twice what we were hoping for! The clothing will be delivered the week of

Thanksgiving and will clothe needy people in our area through both CCHASM and Chesterfield County Social Services. Thank you for helping us with the ministry!



If you are a middle or high school youth or parent and would like to be on my youth email list, please send Lisa an email saying so to Graceyouthrock07@aol.com

I'll add you to my email reminder list and keep you posted with everything that's going on with Grace Youth. Also, if your email address changes throughout the year, please let me know by sending me a quick email. Feel free to call me at home at 748-0338 too.

The dates for Workcamp 2011 are July 3-9. The cost for Workcamp 2011 has increased slightly and is now \$280 per person. **If you**



WorkCamp 2011

are interested in going to work camp this year, your \$50 deposit is due by December 5th. We have a few friends who are interested in going and if we do not fill up with Grace youth by December 5th, I will open this up to friends. Checks are to be made out to "Grace HSYG" and placed in my church mailbox.

Christmas Party



As of the due date of this article, the exact dates for the middle school and high school Christmas parties had not been set.

Youth and parents, please watch the bulletin and check your email for exact date and time information about the youth Christmas parties.

November 17, 2010

GraceLutheranChurch
13028 Harrowgate Road
Chester, VA23831-4521

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of Grace Lutheran Church,

SUBJECT: CONGREGATIONAL SUPPORT LETTER

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father, and our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ, Amen.

Both Jennifer and I would like to thank everyone at Grace for your continued support of us while we continue in the “pastoral formation” out here in St. Louis. Your support is invaluable, and without it, we would find ourselves in an untenable debt situation.

And looking forward to another year, we can finally see some light at the end of the tunnel with vicarage coming up at the end of next summer. Do not get me wrong, I enjoy classes, but I am certainly not an academic, and my vocation will certainly not be in academia! I see myself as a more practically-minded “vocational” type, and Jennifer and I cannot wait to get our chance on vicarage to put all of this *theology* to practical use. It will certainly be exciting, and is honestly the only thing keeping my sanity in check right now.

However, I would be remiss if I did not look back at the past year – that being our first year of Seminary. I can certainly attest to Seminary being a “pressure cooker” and it has lived up to its calling which has led us to near insanity, but also a year which has taught us countless lessons. A particularly poignant lesson this past year for my wife and I has been our dealing with the seemingly excessive ups and downs of life as we struggle with being out here in St. Louis, away from family, being a “student” once again.

And while I can no doubt tell, looking back introspectively that all of our time out here has shaped us, I still feel unprepared for the future tasks that lie ahead. In my orientation I was warned about this, and told the faculty’s job was to “form us with the Holy Spirit’s leading,” and that would be done through our formation process, by “teaching and testing” us. Well, they have done a good job thus far in not only breaking us down, but most of my colleagues and their spouses as well!

But not to be all “doom and gloom,” the reasons the Lutheran Reformers of the 16th century and our Seminary leadership today see the need for such a difficult program is well founded. Seminary is an odd group of 23 year olds up to age 59, some are single and some are married, some have never had a “real” job before, while others have worked over 30 years in private industry. While maybe some of the older, second career guys do not need the “humbling” that some of the younger students need as a reality check of what lies ahead, we all need to be reminded of who is going to be doing the work in our future ministries – God! And in this process, I can certainly attest to it forcing us to rely on God more completely. I hesitate to say complete reliance though, because the “old man” of original sin will not allow me to honestly say, “I completely trust in God *for everything*.”

However, as Jennifer and I have been forced to rely on God more and more, we have become more and more content with our place in life. I can certainly say that letting go, and trusting in God, while not being easy, has freed us from the “grind” of this world. We are called to be in the world, but not of the world as Christians. And one point that has been made clear in a systematics course (doctrines) this fall term was that our true freedom is not freedom to do what *we* want (the popular cultural idea of freedom), but doing God’s will, doing what pleases God. That is true freedom that will give us the most abundant life this world has to offer. For if we use our “freedom” to do what we want, we will not truly be free, but will yet again become slaves to sin.

So, with the fall term behind us, we look forward to the winter and spring terms, and getting out on vicarage. But more importantly, we are looking forward to the birth of our baby this spring. Jennifer is in her 19th week of pregnancy as I write this letter, and is due April 11th. And with the loss of our baby last spring, God has answered our prayers of a healthy pregnancy thus far. Jennifer had a minor surgery back at the end of September which has thus far corrected a condition called incompetent cervix in where her cervix dilated too early last spring, allowing the birth to occur too early. This correction was a shoe string size stitch placed in her cervix to keep it from dilating preterm again.

We ask for your continued prayers for Jennifer as she and the baby continue to move along in the pregnancy.

As a result of Jennifer’s high risk pregnancy, we will not be able to come back home to Virginia until after the birth. We are hopeful that if everything goes well that we will be able to bring a newborn home for Easter to be baptized at Grace!

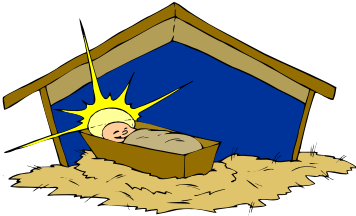
Again, thank you for your support, and we look forward to writing again soon.

εν Χριστ (In Christ),

Justin Pahl
Second Year Seminarian, CSL

December 5, 2010-Neal		December 12, 2010- Pohlig		December 19, 2010		December 26, 2010	
<i>Assisting Minister</i>		<i>Assisting Minister</i>		<i>Assisting Minister</i>		<i>Assisting Minister</i>	
Paul Nasi	0815	John Philipkosky	0815	Pete Adler	0815	Terry Bach	0815
Ruth Bowling	1045	Jennifer Wayne	1045	Kevin Buchter	1045	Bob Merrill	1045
<i>Toller</i>		<i>Toller</i>		<i>Toller</i>		<i>Toller</i>	
Lisa Nowland	0815	Abigail Phillips	0815	Joy Phillips	0815	Jeff Rowell	0815
Bob Dunn	1045	Cori Fischer	1045	Jill LaPrad	1045	Sandra Marr	1045
<i>Cantor</i>		<i>Cantor</i>		<i>Cantor</i>		<i>Cantor</i>	
Pete Adler	1045	Stephanie Sloan	1045	Pastor Finck	1045	Don Smith	1045
<i>Server</i>		<i>Server</i>		<i>Server</i>		<i>Server</i>	
Jeanett Gattis	0815	Dick Reese	1045	Greg Hite	0815	Don Smith	1045
<i>Acolyte/Crucifer</i>		<i>Acolyte/Crucifer</i>		<i>Acolyte/Crucifer</i>		<i>Acolyte/Crucifer</i>	
Heath Gross	0815	Jessica Gustavson	0815	Lindsay Nowland	0815	Sarah Oertel	0815
Kevin Quigley		Erik Gustavson		Josh Nowland		Laura Oertel	
Austin Rowell	1045	Ben Rogers	1045	Emily Buchter	1045	Meghan Schinzer	1045
Colin Neal		Reese Manning		Rachael Wilson		Cori Fischer	
<i>Lectors</i>		<i>Lectors</i>		<i>Lectors</i>		<i>Lectors</i>	
Peggy Gordon	0815	Ed Ward	0815	Pete Adler	0815	Janet Arnold	0815
Larry Grimes		Lisa Scott		Peg Adler		Sue Gamber	
Barry Richards	1045	Ann Erbes	1045	Kevin Buchter	1045	Peggy Gordon	1045
Melanie Sandford		Ruth Bowling		Mickey Brooks		Jill LaPrad	
<i>Ushers</i>		<i>Ushers</i>		<i>Ushers</i>		<i>Ushers</i>	
Robin Nasi	0815	Ruth Bowling	0815	Thom Hagen	0815	Fred Townsend	0815
Gaylord Thompson		Peggy Gordon		Bill King		Ed Ward	
Chuck Barnes		Debbie Jacobs		Pete Burke		Peter Schoultis	
Paula Barnes		Jake Jacobs		Dave Long		Russ Zimmerman	
Conny Erbes	1045	Rick Baker	1045	Sarah Buchter	1045	Rodney Wilson	1045
Bob Phelps		Robert Beck		John Petik		Mike Foster	
Brad McMinn		Scott Osmundson		Joe Manna		David Brown	
Corey Neal		Ron Mabry		Helen Bellflower		Greg Gross	
<i>Nursery</i>		<i>Nursery</i>		<i>Nursery</i>		<i>Nursery</i>	
Raeann Eley	0815	Jackie Gustavson	0815	Jill LaPrad	0815	Susan Nicol	0815
Cris Fischer	1045	Jean Hudgins	1045	Peggy Metz	1045	Kathy Wilson	1045
<i>Hosts</i>		<i>Hosts</i>		<i>Hosts</i>		<i>Hosts</i>	
Bill/Peggy Smith	0815	Ed Ward	0815	Janet Arnold	0815	Chuck/Paul Barnes	0815
Reade/Eleanor Shook	1045	M Smith/Vivian Spage	1045	Rod/Kathy Wilson	1045	Harry/Gloria Anderson	1045
<i>Counters</i>		<i>Counters</i>		<i>Counters</i>		<i>Counters</i>	
Fred Weber/M Wooldridge		Felia Ayala/Forrest Sloan		Sandra Marr/Lisa Scott		Bob Dunn/Conny Erbes	

December 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
		* communion		1	2	3	4
			Bible Study 10am Soup Supper 6:15p (deacons) Advent Service 7pm	Happy Clappers 12:30p Joyful Noise 6pm Choir 7pm Confirmation 7pm	Mens Breakfast//Bible class 7am Football Dinner 5 - 9 (Sharon Quigley)		
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
Worship 8:15 a* Worship 10:45am		Staff Mtg 9:30a Deacons 7pm	Bible Study 10am Soup Supper 6:15p (council) Advent Service 7pm	Happy Clappers 12:30p Joyful Noise 6pm Choir 7pm Confirmation 7pm	Boy Scout Lock In Friday night to Sat. Morning Paul Nasi		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Worship 8:15 a Worship 10:45am* Choir Christmas Cantata		Council 7pm	Bible Study 10am Soup Supper 6:15p (congregation) Advent Service 7pm	Happy Clappers 12:30p Joyful Noise 6pm Choir 7pm Confirmation 7pom	Mens Breakfast//Bible class 7am		
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
Worship 8:15 a* Worship 10:45am 2 - 4 pm Chester Church Tour Grace Christmas Party 6:30pm		Angel Circle 10am "Bad Girls" 7pm	Bible Study 10am	No Confirmation	Christmas Eve Service and Holy Communion 6:30pm and 11PM	Christmas Day Service 11AM	
26	27	28	29	30	31		
Worship 8:15 a Worship 10:45am*		Planning Com. Mtg 7Pm	Bible Study 10am	No Confirmation	New Year's Eve Service 6:30pm		