

# Living Grace

## Notes

### September 2009 Newsletter

The Reverend David E. Hardy, D. D., Pastor  
Web Page: [www.livinggracelutheran.org](http://www.livinggracelutheran.org)

*Gathered to Celebrate, Called to Witness, Sent to Serve!*

#### ***Pastoral Letter from Bishop Gordy***

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven. . . . a time to mourn and a time to dance." -Ecclesiastes 3.

This past Friday, after hours of heart wrenching discussion and debate, our church, meeting in Assembly in Minneapolis, voted to ease limits on gay clergy and to allow congregations which wish to do so to recognize committed, life-long, publically accountable same sex relationships. It was a time for dancing for some, a time for mourning for others.

Some feel that they are finally included fully in the life of our church. The day for which they have worked and prayed for years has arrived. Others find this change to be deeply troubling. They view the actions of the Assembly as contrary to the Bible and Lutheran teaching and practice.

During the weeks and months to come, I hope that both those groups and all those who find themselves somewhere in between will be able to talk with one another as we continue to discern the Spirit's direction for us and for our church.

The implications of the assembly's actions will unfold more fully over time. Over the coming months, processes to implement the assembly's decisions will be worked out by churchwide leaders and staff, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops. This will not happen right away, but will take some months. We

know this much for sure: Whereas persons in committed same-sex relationships formerly were barred from serving on any of the official ministry rosters of our church, a way is now being opened for such persons to serve in rostered ministries, but only if they are otherwise qualified, as determined by the synod's candidacy committee, and if a congregation chooses to call them. The call process will operate in the same way that it has since the beginning of our church, with congregations free to call that person to whom the Spirit directs them.

In our Southeastern Synod we are a microcosm of the ELCA on these matters. At our assembly in June, we voted by the same percentage as the Churchwide Assembly to approve the changes in ministry policy. We are far from being of one mind here. Thus, we need time to think and talk prayerfully about the implications of these actions. In the words of Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson, "We need one another. We need time. We need the voices of those who lament and those who rejoice over these actions, for together we have been called to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and engage in God's mission for the life of the world."

I saw a bit of that loving spirit in action when the vote was taken at the assembly. In our synod's delegation of voting members and in others, I witnessed those for whom it was time to dance, refrain from dancing and instead reach out to, and in many cases, cry with those who were mourning. That spirit of mutual consolation must be ours in the coming days.

In Galatians, St. Paul admonishes us to "Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." This mutual burden bearing is one of the things that separate the church of Jesus from the world in which we are each required and expected to bear our own burdens. Playing on the ELCA tag line, "God's work. Our hands.," Dr. Ishmael Noko, a Tanzanian pastor and the outgoing executive director of the Lutheran World Federation reminded the Assembly that unity is a work of God. Our hands are called to serve that unity. The church of Jesus Christ is not ours to dismember. I am convinced that no church in the world has put the gospel into practice any better than the ELCA. We are bound to do all that we can to preserve its God-given unity and health.

Thank you for your prayers and for your support.

+Julian Gordy  
Bishop  
ELCA Southeastern Synod

### ***LutherRanch***

There is a new name in Lutheran camping destinations – Lutherranch. Located in Talapoosa, GA, it is the newest of the Lutheridge-Lutherrock ministries in the Southeast. Being built primarily to provide a more “local” site for the children, adults, youth groups, and church groups of our Synod, it is taking shape now. But like most new projects, it needs our support.

Ms. Libby Bedenbaugh of LLMI will be here on Sunday, 30 August, to talk with us about the new camp. She will also be helping to kick off a campaign for support of this new venture within our congregation.

Each congregation of the Synod is being asked to commit \$100 per active attending member over three years to support the camp development. That is \$33.00 for each of two years and \$34.00 in one year. That is certainly not unreasonable nor unattainable.

Many of us attended church camps in the summers of our youth and remember those experiences, often in a positive light. This new camp makes such experiences more available to more people within our Synod. Libby will have a few words during the service at 10:30 and then a 15minute presentation after the lunch.

### ***BEST OF.....***

We do not know how these things are done, but Living Grace Lutheran Church has been selected for the 2009 Best of Tucker Award in the Places of Worship category by the U.S. Commerce Association. WE are told that various sources of information are gathered and analyzed to choose the winners in each category; that the program is focused on quality; and that winners are determined based on the information gathered both internally by the USCA and data provided by third parties. However it is done, we are pleased to learn about this.

### ***Lay Assistants***

#### **Sunday, 6 September**

Ushers	8:30 – Jim Tuminella 10:30 – Merrill and Jo Ann Durrence
Lectors	8:30 – Jim Tuminella 10:30 – Jason Eklund
Communion Assistants	8:30 – Leanne Beutler 10:30 – Team 2
Acolyte	10:30 – Melody Ireton
Greeters	10:30 – Stephanie Rhodes/Phyllis Prunty
Counters	Jim and Cynthia Outman

#### **Sunday, 13 September**

Ushers	8:30 – Keith Siekierski 10:30 – Paul Lefebvre/Ed Kennedy
Lectors	8:30 – Jan Levensgood 10:30 – Lorraine Koeves
Communion Assistants	8:30 – Missy Streubel 10:30 – Team 3
Acolyte	10:30 – Olivia Durrence
Greeters	10:30 – Connie Holley/Gale Horton
Counters	John and Margaret Holden

**Sunday, 20 September**

Ushers	8:30 – Michael Hardy
	10:30 – Will Arroyo/Harold Bowers
Lectors	8:30 – Michael Hardy
	10:30 – Betty Bartling
Communion Assistants	8:30 – David Benner
	10:30 – Team 5
Acolyte	10:30 – Nikki Ireton
Greeters	10:30 – Lanny Henderson/Betty Hitz
Counters	Pat Stowers/Dot Beaver

**Sunday, 27 September**

Ushers	8:30 – David Benner
	10:30 – Chip Combee/Jason Dick
Lectors	8:30 – Missy Streubel
	10:30 – Colin Cressman
Communion Assistants	8:30 – Jan Levengood
	10:30 – Team 1
Acolyte	10:30 – Erin Cunefare
Greeters	10:30 – Lorraine Koeves/Karen Bramlet
Counters	David and Lin Parker

- Team 1 = Will Arroyo – Captain  
Jan Levengood  
Stephanie Cunefare
- Team 2 = Margery Kellar – Captain  
Lesley Campbell  
Carol Ireton
- Team 3 = Jim Outman – Captain  
Mary Jane Outman  
Cynthia Outman
- Team 4 = Marlene Hardy – Captain  
Jo Kroger  
Paul Lefebvre
- Team 5 = Lynn Lefebvre – Captain  
Stephanie Rhodes  
Carolyn Davis

Floaters/Substitutes – Leanne Beutler; Taylor Cunefare; and Jason Eklund

**General News and Notes**

**September Birthdays**

3	Stephanie Greer		
4	Franklin Benner		
6	Little Lionberger	Tate Arroyo	Larry Wall

7	Phyllis Prunty	Mary Anne Long
9	Jim Outman	
12	Leanne Beutler	
19	Paul Lefebvre	
20	Randy Helmey	
28	John Lyons	

### **Deaths**

*Jerry Prunty* was called to his eternal rest on 5 July 2009. A funeral service was held on 10 July 2009, at Living Grace.

*Anna Bowers*, mother of Harold Bowers was call to her eternal rest on 16 July 2009. A funeral service was held on 25 July 2009, at Living Grace.

### **Changes**

*Paul McCarty and Claire Shepherd* were married at Living Grace on Saturday, 11 July 2009.

*Hallie Anderson* was married in May and now is known as *Hallie Dillon*. Her new phone number is 404/862-5441.

*Karl and Carol Ireton* have new phone numbers:

Karl – 770/313-7822

Carol – 770/313-9645

### **Newsletter Articles**

To submit a newsletter article, you can either have a hard copy into the church office by the deadline date listed or send an electronic format to Leanne Beutler at [Lbeutler@aol.com](mailto:Lbeutler@aol.com).

### **Newsletter Distribution**

The newsletters are being received electronically via email to members to those who have requested it. We will continue to print the newsletter and place them in the mailboxes in the narthex but we strongly encourage you that if you have an email address, you receive your newsletter electronically. This will save costs on paper, the copier costs and the time in collating the hard copy of the newsletter.

At any time, you wish to receive this newsletter via electronically please inform Stephanie Cunefare, [sacunefare@hotmail.com](mailto:sacunefare@hotmail.com) or Leanne Beutler, [Lbeutler@aol.com](mailto:Lbeutler@aol.com).

### **Thank You**

How can I begin to Thank All of You? Everyone at Living Grace Church has been such a big help to me for the past three years. I just can't begin to thank you enough, your support and care has helped me through the trying time and I want to say God Bless Each and everyone of you.

*Phyllis Prunty*

## ***Graceful Group Resumes Monthly Meetings***

The Graceful Group will hold its next meeting on Thursday, 10 September. Come join us for a potluck lunch (main dish, salad, vegetable, or dessert) at 11:30 a.m. Invite your friends to join our group.

The speaker will be Walter Drake, a Decatur resident and knowledgeable speaker on many local historical topics. He will present his talk, "The Winecoff Hotel Fire", one of the major disasters of Atlanta. This is an opportunity for all of us ex-snowbirds to ask questions about local occurrences and perhaps customs. For instance, why do black-eyed peas and collard greens bring good luck if eaten on 1 January?

Please make your reservation by calling or emailing Jo Ann Durrence by Tuesday, 8 September, if you plan to attend (404/633-1833 or email [gmdurrence@bellsouth.net](mailto:gmdurrence@bellsouth.net)).

Sue Benner will be looking for volunteers after the meeting to help with packing school bags for shipping. Please stay after the meeting and help if you can.

We are always in need of helpers for table set up and clean up. Let us know if you can assist us in this way.

We will again have a table for books and magazines that you are willing to donate for someone else's enjoyment. You may read a book or magazine and bring it back for someone else to enjoy next month. Unclaimed magazines will always be given to the DeKalb recycling program.

Mark 10 September on your calendar and join us for a great time of food and fellowship.

## ***Ballroom Dancing for Beginners***

Did you miss out on the last chance to start Ballroom Dancing? Do you want to dance off a few pounds? Then put on your dancing shoes and come on down! We will be starting another beginner (refresher) class on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays of every month from 7:30-8:30 pm, in the sanctuary and only \$10.00 per person. The sessions for September will be the 14<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. Please join our dance instructor Tom Bellamy for an enjoyable evening and a fun way to get up and get moving again! If you have any questions, please speak with Leanne or Steph C.

## ***EMAIL ALERT***

Please be advised that our "Living Grace Prayers" email system was compromised on 28 August. The information contained in the email referred to the sending of money, via Western Union, to Margery Kellar. This email was NOT generated by Margery or associated with Living Grace. The Living Grace prayers list will need to be modified and the problem corrected. Until this time, please verify any information you find suspect with the church office. Also, just as practice, never send money to anyone, even if you recognize a name. The

problem will be investigated. We will let you know when the problem has been rectified. Please continue your prayers for those previously listed before this interruption.

### ***Book of Faith Study Continues***

Pastor Hardy will be presenting the next two courses in the continuing Book Of Faith Study series beginning in September.

Each of the sessions will be repeated three times each week. Wednesday sessions will begin at 10:00 AM, Thursday sessions will begin at 6:45 PM and Friday sessions will begin at 1:30 PM.

The cost of the study guide for each course is \$18.

The first of six sessions on the Book of Exodus begins on Wednesday September 23rd. Scheduled dates are:

<b><u>Wednesdays</u></b>	<b><u>Thursdays</u></b>	<b><u>Fridays</u></b>
September 23rd	September 24th	September 25th
September 30th	October 1st	October 2nd
10/7 - No Class	October 8th	October 9th
October 14th	October 15th	October 16th
October 21st	October 22nd	October 23rd
October 28th	October 29th	October 30th

The first of six sessions on the Book of Romans begins on Wednesday January 6th. Scheduled dates are:

<b><u>Wednesdays</u></b>	<b><u>Thursdays</u></b>	<b><u>Fridays</u></b>
January 6th	January 7th	January 8th
January 13th	January 14th	January 15th
January 20th	January 21st	January 22nd
January 27th	January 28th	January 29th
February 3rd	February 4th	February 5th
February 10th	February 11th	February 12th

### ***Guidelines for Prayer Requests***

Please notify Leanne Beutler, Newsletter Editor via email at [Lbeutler@aol.com](mailto:Lbeutler@aol.com) or written note to add or remove a name from the prayer list. If the name has appeared in three consecutive newsletters, it will be removed in the fourth newsletter unless you notify Leanne by the newsletter deadline.

### ***Praying for Members, Family, and Friends***

#### ***Members***

Tamara Albrecht; Nancy Althafer; Jim Axel; Ruth Cressman; Bill Conley; Laurel Jackson; Verna Jensen; Julien Lange; Johnny Levensgood; Ree Lionberger; and Linda Tuminella

**Marian Seckinger**  
Sister of JoAnn Durrence  
**Steven Main**  
Son of Viola Main  
**Fred Reese**  
Brother of Cate Sulek  
**Helen Cunningham**  
Mother of Margery Kellar  
**Michael Nowling**  
Friend of Linda Tuminella  
**Anne Cressman**  
Mother of Marlene Hardy  
**MaryAnn Sweeney**  
Friend of Shirley Arroyo  
**Linda Linke**  
Friend of Living Grace  
**Judy Kissel**  
Friend of Lin Parker  
**Ursula Booch**  
Friend of Connie Holley  
**Marietta Sandidge**  
Mother of Jo Kroger  
**Barbara Marsh**  
Friend of Jan Levengood  
**Evelyn Woosley**  
Friend of Living Grace  
**Lib and Joe Hale**  
Friends of Connie Holley  
**Mary Mildred McArthur**  
Mother of Mary Jane Outman  
**Rosemary Stewart**  
Friend of Tom Bellamy  
**Sarah Jane**  
Sister of Tom Bellamy  
**Marquenetta Clark and children**  
Friend of Living Grace

### ***Health Ministry***

As summer comes to an end, I hope you were able to share some valuable family time. I would like to share with you about **Living as the Sandwich Generation.**

Caring for children and aging parents can be a profound blessing and also very difficult. As we are blessed with longer life, many of us also live with more chronic health problems, associated disability and difficulties in providing for our

daily needs. God's word calls us to honor our parents and help in providing for their needs. At the same time, the needs of our spouse and children also call out to us. God's word encourages us to care, nurture and discipline our children out of love for them. Currently in the US, almost 50% of all marriages end in divorce, and child abuse and neglect have risen astronomically. The average child watches four hours of TV every day with the vast majority of this exposed to language, values, relationships and actions not consistent with our faith. Most families are able to spend very little time in quality communication or doing things together.

How can we live our family commitments in a God – pleasing way? Scripture encourages us to provide what is needed for our families directly or more often indirectly (1 Tim 5:8 ) God's word also promises that he won't give us more than we can carry (with His help), and that as pressured as we feel, with the resource of our faith, we are not overwhelmed or destroyed (2Cor. 4:8,9).

What Can We Do about all of these Competing Responsibilities?

God's word gives us guidance, support and hope as we live out our days in His Grace. First, we need to continue to **feed ourselves spiritually** so that God can use us in our relationships with others. Living a balanced life provides benefit for this life and the life to come. With our fast paced lives, it is very easy to neglect our own physical, emotional and spiritual self care, but this is a dangerous path to take. Second, we can **trust the Lord to provide for all our needs**, because he cares for us (1 Pet. 5:7). Third, we **can develop a list of family needs and concerns** for ourselves, parents and children, delete from the list those you can't help. Of those that remain, determine for whom you are the primary responsible party and then determine which are the most important concerns. Fourth, **contact Pastor or your Parish Nurse** if we can be a help to you in any way. You are not alone in your struggles. We want to be a help to you and be a part of your support system. Yours in Christ



Jan Levensgood, Parish Nurse/Health Minister

There is an organization called I CARE, INC which uses volunteer drivers for seniors. A couple of our members have been very involved over the years providing transportation and companionship for senior citizens of all faiths living in DeKalb County. These drivers are matched with Senior Citizens, who for financial and medical reasons, have no other means of transportation to medical appointments. If any of you would like to be involved with this group, let me know. If you know of anyone who might need transportation to an appointment, let me know also.

The next meeting of the Health Ministry Committee will be held on Saturday September 26, 2009, 12:00N at the church.

**Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
(WELCA) News**

**Twenty-Second Annual Convention Southeastern Synod Women of  
the ELCA**

The Twenty-Second Annual Convention of the Southeastern Synod Women of the ELCA will be held at The Inn At Ellis Square in Savannah, Georgia on September 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>.

<b>Theme</b>	<i>"In One Spirit"</i>
<b>Bible Verse</b>	Ephesians 4:1-6
<b>Hymn</b>	<i>"We are One in the Spirit"</i>
<b>Chaplains</b>	Pastor Shelley Nelson-Bridger Pastor Beth Birkholz
<b>Keynote Speaker</b>	Dr. Fred Reisz Fred the Fantastic "Mystories"
<b>Bible Study Leader</b>	Pastor Bill Roen
<b>Music Director</b>	Dana Lee Smith
<b>Saturday Lunch</b>	Catered by Paula Deen's "Lady and Sons"
<b>Banquet</b>	Low Country Boil Ben Tucker Trio entertains
<b>Love Offering</b>	Care and Counseling Center of Georgia (Women's Prison Ministry)
<b>Special Guest</b>	Bishop Julian Gordy
<b>Churchwide Representative</b>	Charlene Spillman
<b>In-Kind Gifts</b>	Diapers and baby clothes for Lutheran Services of Georgia
<b>Host Cluster</b>	Ebenezer Cluster

Contact Louise Iconis @ 770.934.5072 or Sue Benner @ 770.493.4044 or [suembenner@Yahoo.com](mailto:suembenner@Yahoo.com) for additional information.

***Living Grace Women of the ELCA General Meeting***

The next general meeting will be held on Saturday September 12, 2009, 12:00N at the church. All those attending are asked to bring a covered dish, either meat, vegetable or a salad. The Naomi Circle will serve as hostess and provide drinks and dessert. All women of Living Grace and their friends are cordially invited to attend.

***Women of the Church Sunday September 27<sup>th</sup>***

Our annual Women of the Church Sunday will be celebrated on September 27<sup>th</sup>.

Cookies and punch will be served after the late service and at that time a drawing for two of the quilts made by the Piece Maker's will be held.

Tickets @ 3 for \$5 are still available for the drawing. Funds from the sale of tickets directly benefit the Piece Maker's group.

### ***Piece Maker's***

The quilting group will meet at St. James Church on Thursday September 3<sup>rd</sup>, Thursday September 24<sup>th</sup> and on Saturday September 12<sup>th</sup> - 9:00AM to 12:00N.

The quilts are made and sent to Lutheran World Relief for distribution to those in need around the world.

You may call Agnes Nelson @770.458.3473 if you would like to participate.

### ***Sew-N-Sews***

The Sew-N-Sews and the Book Bag Ladies will be meeting on Monday September 14<sup>th</sup> between the hours of 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM at the Church. The Sew-N-Sew morning session will end at 12:00N, at which time a light lunch will be served. The Book Bag Ladies will then convene from 12:30 PM to 3:00 PM.

If you would like to help you may call JoAnn Durrence @404.633.1833 or Sue Benner @ 770.493.4044.

### ***Outreach Committee***

#### ***Third Annual Celebration of Church Dedication Outreach Appreciation Luncheon***

Approximately 100 members of Living Grace gathered together on Sunday July 31<sup>st</sup> for food, fun and the celebration of the Third Anniversary of the dedication of our sanctuary on Cooledge Road!

The celebration was conducted in conjunction with our long standing annual appreciation luncheon for all the faithful members and friends of Living Grace who have volunteered their time over the past year to participate in our outreach projects.

Thanks to all who attended and all who provided food. A special thanks to our Thrivent representative, Bill Rumble, for providing a financial donation for the event.

### ***Upcoming Outreach Activities***

As family vacations end and we return to our regular work schedules, please remember to plan to volunteer for one or more of the Outreach ministry projects that will be coming this fall:

**Night Shelter for Women:** for the 27<sup>th</sup> consecutive year Living Grace will be assisting Congregation Shearith Israel in staffing its overnight shelter for

homeless women. The shelter opens on Monday, November 16<sup>th</sup>. Living Grace will provide overnight volunteers for that first week and also will provide support for a week in mid January. Additional information and sign-up sheets will be forthcoming.

**Hope Lodge:** In November, we will also continue our tradition of serving an evening meal to guests who reside at Hope Lodge. Hope Lodge provides housing for cancer patients undergoing treatment at Emory Hospital and for their caregivers. We will have the exact date in our next newsletter.

**Foster Parent Gas Cards:** For the past several years, Living Grace, in cooperation with a number of other Lutheran churches has provided gasoline credit cards for the parents participating in the Lutheran Services of Georgia Foster Parent program. This is just a quick reminder to please include this program in your Christmas giving plans.

**Salvation Army Bell Ringing:** This will be the third year of participation in this program of the Salvation Army. The exact day and times that will be set aside for our church will be announced shortly.

**Continuing Programs:** In addition to these major programs, please remember to bring your donations for: Living Grace Food Pantry

NETWorks Ministry

Books for Prison Ministry

Heifer International

Heifer Sunday - September 20<sup>th</sup>

## ***Parish Education/Youth***

### **RALLY SUNDAY**

Rally Sunday is Sunday, Sept. 13, the Sunday after Labor Day, at 9:30am. Parents and Grandparents, Aunties and Uncles and neighbors, please bring the children for fun games and snacks. You will be registering them for Sunday school. The children will not want to miss this morning of "playing" at church.

September 20, 9:30, will be the first Sunday of formal instruction for children's parish education. We will be using new Sunday School curriculum.

### **LET'S BOWL**

From Margery Kellar and Carolyn Davis:

We had such fun bowling with the Living Grace Youth after last year's VBS that we decided to make it a monthly event! On the fourth Sunday of every month, beginning in September on the 27th, we will be bowling at Suburban Lanes, 2619 N. Decatur Rd (behind Hancock Fabrics). Up until 2pm, the charge is \$1.50 per game. Shoe rental is \$3. After 2 the games go up to \$2.25 per person. Although we hope that this activity will be well attended by our youth and their friends, it is open to any one who wants to bowl with us, young and young at heart!

## **WATER JUG PROJECT**

Thanks to everyone who helped the youth collect over 100 plastic jugs with which to empty our baptismal pool and then water the grounds of Living Grace. On a sunny June morning, Dot Beaver led many cheerful youth and adult jug-dippers, fillers, and carriers, and we got the job done by noon!

## **YOUTH GATHERING**

Carolyn Davis attended as a volunteer the 2009 ELCA Youth Gathering, held in New Orleans this summer. This extraordinary servant event, with an attendance of 37,000 Youth, was reported to be the biggest convention in that city since hurricane Katrina. Ask Carolyn all about it. She will be happy to share with you her experience. We hope that the Youth of Living Grace will be able to experience the next Youth Gathering in 2012, at a location soon to be determined!

## **VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**

Many, many thanks to Stephanie Rhodes, who, while I was recovering from surgery, stepped in and led a wonderful team of adult and youth volunteers to pull off another memorable week of Vacation bible school at Living Grace. God bless all of you! - Cathy Shirah

Here's Stephanie R.'s account of the week:

VBS was a huge success this year! Camp EDGE (Experience + Discover God Everywhere) integrated exciting science experiments, creative crafts, exhilarating recreational activities, Bible stories, delicious snacks and reflection time.

The campers were led on various treks each night by our very own Youth Camp Counselors. Blaze and Sparkx opened and closed the program with the Camp EDGE theme every night. The music was the best VBS music I have ever heard in my life! The security was a necessary and essential component of the program, as well. Let's not forget those cool paintings and photographs! The children were so excited about the hot dogs on Thursday night and the Cookies and Punch reception on Friday night!

There is so much talent in our church that I am reminded of the scripture, Romans 8:28; "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Thanks to the talents of the volunteers and your gifts; VBS was unforgettable! Also, a big thanks to the parents and grandparents who brought the little campers. Please bring them back next year!

## **ONE MORE REMINDER...**

Don't you wish you were a kid again so that you could attend Sunday school and have lots of fun learning about GOD? We hope to see many little (and big!) smiling faces next month! Put Sunday school on your Google calendar, Blackberry and your PPD! See you soon!!

*Stephanie Rhodes and Cathy Shirah*  
Co-Directors of Parish Education

## **Mission Trip Wrap Up**

Mission Trip 2009 was a rousing success. We had 53 people attend from 5 Lutheran Churches in the Atlanta and Charleston areas. We ranged in age from 11-78. Both ends of the age range did the same kind of work too! So, it doesn't matter your age or skill level. Everyone on the team makes a difference.

This year we built a house for Sarah Boggs and her two special needs children Tirzah Joy and Samuel. The house we built with Sarah was as completed as we possibly could before leaving. We start with only a concrete slab and finish with interior framing, a complete roof, siding, windows, doors and a front and back porch. This really is a work camp and not a recreation camp. The kids and adults take pride in their craftsmanship and have a good time doing it. Many test their own limits with trying a new skill. Others work quietly reflecting what is really happening here. Most work days are filled with laughter, a sense of accomplishment and very achy muscles. At the end of the week, the following speech was prepared which really summed up what happened during one week in July, in Pendleton Co., WV that has joined a small family with a bigger one called, the LAMMNS of God ...

*“There are only a few things that last in a persons mind forever. Some sad, like the death of a loved one. Others, much more happy, like having children, or having your house built by a bunch of gangly, motley kids. And it will stick in our minds too. We poured our blood, sweat, and tears into building this house. From the splinters we donated our blood. In the sun, we donated our sweat, and when we hit our hands with the hammers, the tears appeared. But, we donated them to this house, to you, to God. And now we donate one more thing. This board, which we've all signed, giving blessing and praise. We are giving this to you so you can remember us and so that your house may be blessed forever more. Thank you Sarah for letting us build your house. It was OUR honour and OUR privilege.”*

Again, our deepest thanks and gratitude go to the congregation of Living Grace, friends and family that helped support this event for our youth Without you, Sarah, Tirzah and Samuel would not have a house to move into this month and call it their home.

In friendship,  
*Steph Cunefare*

## **Stewardship**

A Message of Faith

When I was eleven years old, I took a Summer vacation trip to visit my Uncle Tony in Long Island. As was the custom in his family, he took the entire family to Sunday Mass at the local Catholic Church. When it came time for the offering, I realized that I had only 10 cents left from my allowance, and that I really wanted to use that money for an ice cream cone later that afternoon. As the

usher passed the collection plate in the rows in front of me, I was confronted with a dilemma. I wanted both to contribute to the church, and to have money to get an ice cream cone. As the collection plate was passed to me, I deposited the coin in the collection plate and passed it on to my neighbors. I chose to forego the ice cream cone.

After church, my uncle Tony asked me if he could treat me to an ice cream cone at the local Dairy Queen. This was totally unexpected and graciously accepted by me. My cousins and I enjoyed ice cream cones from Uncle Tony later that day.

At that early age, I was unaware of several passages of scripture which I would like to share with you to reinforce my sincere belief that it is not what you give, but the spirit with which you give it that truly will make a difference in our lives.

In Matthew 6:3-5, our Lord clearly advises, “When you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret, and your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.”

In Matthew 21:22, our Lord clearly states, “Whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.”

In Mark 12:41-45, our Lord Jesus directly addresses the value of giving. “And he sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the multitude putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came, and put in two copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him and said to them, “Truly I say to you, the poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For they all contributed out of their abundance; but she, out of her poverty, has put in everything she had, her whole living.”

It has been my experience, just as it was over fifty years ago when I was eleven, that whatever I give to the church does not deplete any funds, but actually creates the opposite effect—all of my needs are provided.

Prayerfully consider your level of giving and stewardship, with the full knowledge in faith, that your heavenly Father will reward you, and will provide for you all of those things which you need.

Yours in Christ,  
*Will Arroyo*

## **SOFTBALL WRAP-UP**

The Metro Atlanta Lutheran Softball League has been in existence since the early 1970s. Many of the men in the church, over the years, were actively involved in the softball league. Prior to our merger into Living Grace, St. Matthew and St. Michael were, for many years, opposing teams in the league. I am blessed to still be playing in the league, as a member of the Living Grace team, with my sons, Tate and Stephen.

In the past season, the following Lutheran churches participated in the league:

All Saints (two teams), Trinity (two teams), Christ the King, Holy Cross (two teams), Christ the Lord, Living Grace, and Sola Fide. Living Grace finished in second place in the regular season, and placed fourth in the end of the season tournament. The plaques which Living Grace received this year are to be displayed in the Fellowship Hall.

The plaques, in part, read as follows: “Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

This is evidenced by a pre-game prayer which all teams share before each game, where we ask that all players be protected from injury and to play with true Christian sportsmanship.

My thanks to our coach, Tate Arroyo, and to all of our players for a good season.

Any men at Living Grace who are interested in playing with the team next season, which runs from April through June, please contact me at 404-909-2613, or at [wharroyo10@bellsouth.net](mailto:wharroyo10@bellsouth.net)

Yours in Christ,  
*Will Arroyo*

## **Worship and Music**

## *Living Out Our Baptism*

Summer reading lists, swimming pools, outdoor festivals, and fairs all have conspired to turn summer vacation from truly lazy days into busy days ordered differently. As a result, many congregations that celebrate a version of “Rally Day” in early September may find necessary a rally for rest, right worship, and the reordering of work centered in God’s word and sustained by the Spirit, rather than a rally for yet again more vigorous (if different) activity. Indeed, it may be most important to heed this word of Isaiah:

***The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. (Isa. 50:4)***

There is much joy intrinsic to seasons of return and renewal, and there is little reason to put a damper on the natural impulse of many churches to match the rhythm of school registration and garden harvest—but there is need to ensure that the schooling sustains the weary and the harvest feeds the soul. In a recent survey of formerly churched adults in America, LifeWay Research discovered that the number-one life change that prompted people to leave the church was that they simply are too busy. The top motivating reason for people to *return* to church is also simple—they want to be closer to God. Could it be that these two are related? As Rob Bell asks in his nooma video, *Noise*: “Do you wish God’s voice would be louder in your life? Does all the noise in our lives make it hard to hear God? If I’m not still, and if I don’t listen, how is Jesus going to give me rest?” The length of the time after Pentecost may well invite us to practice more deeply the discipline of silence.

*From Sundays and Seasons, Preparing for Autumn, Year B 2009*

### **Adult Choir**

Summer is waning, and it will soon be time to resume our regular September-May schedule. Thank you to all who have been able to sing with the Summer Choir—only a couple more weeks to go and for those of you who could not, we missed you. In either case, I look forward to beginning a new choir season with all of you. The regular season will actually begin on a Sunday this year, namely 13 September, with warm-up at 9:45 a.m. Weekly rehearsals will begin on the following Wednesday, 16 September, 7-8:30 p.m. Come join us and sing!

### **Handbell Choir**

For those of you who feel they cannot sing, come join the ringing choir! Even if you don’t know how to read music, we will teach you. Our normal rehearsals are on Sundays after the 10:30 worship service for an hour. Our first rehearsal will be on Sunday, 20 September, at 12 noon in the sanctuary. You can be as young as 10 years old and as mature as a 100! For more information, please contact, Leanne Beutler, Director.

***Special Days in September***

*14 September*  
Holy Cross Day

*21 September*  
Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist

*29 September*  
Michael and All Angels

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***LIVING GRACE Evangelical Lutheran Church***

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