



# GraceNet

Knoxville, TN

January 2024

## Monthly Ministry Focus

### Grace Lutheran Disaster Response

PSALMS 72:12-13— *For He will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help, 13 He will take pity on the weak....*

In the aftermath of a natural disaster we watch our TVs and witness the destruction and tragedy as homes are destroyed, lives lost, and landscapes ruined. Many of the afflicted reflect immediate grief and shock from not knowing where friends and relatives are, whether they are alive or not, and finally an expression of faith and hope in God is voiced.

Back in 2005, I was privileged to serve with many other Christians of many denominations in the reconstruction process after Hurricane Katrina. After seeing the massive destruction and participating in the rebuilding efforts, I was left with a lasting impression to help those devastated by such disasters. The reality of this came through the tears of a young down-syndrome lady as our team took her on a tour of her reconditioned home. The last time she had seen the home it was under 11 feet of water and nearly all of its contents were destroyed. God's grace was given to her through the hands, feet and skills of many, and I was one of those. It was this experience that led me to suggest a disaster response ministry at Grace. Grace is filled with many willing servants, and I thought that a ministry organized for this purpose would receive great support.

This new ministry idea was first discussed with Pastors Elseroad and Anderson back in July 2022, and the idea

was quickly and enthusiastically embraced by them. After this meeting, Sam Jones and I were appointed to Co-Chair the planning committee.

The first actions were to seek a national affiliation, recruit volunteers, purchase a trailer, and then tools and supplies. At the Annual Voters Meeting in December 2022 the congregation approved the recommendation to form:

**Grace Lutheran Disaster Response (GLDR)**, in association with The LCMS Disaster Response and with an organizing budget of \$15,000.

A full committee of seven members was assembled and they first met in January 2023. Committee responsibilities were assigned to organize tool requirements, detail trailer specs and schedule training classes to qualify volunteers for service as disaster response workers. Recruitment was announced and conducted in January and February 2023. Many of these volunteers stated they had been looking for an opportunity to serve in this way. Thirty five Grace volunteers have since been certified by the LCMS as disaster response workers and nine of these took advance classes in chainsaw operation and safe debris removal practices. All classes were completed by April 30, 2023. The total cost for these classes

was just over \$4,100.

By the end of June we purchased some tools and a trailer:

Trailer costs including signage (a member donation) - \$11,500.

Initial tool purchase - \$8,700



(Continued on page 2)

## ***Disaster Response (Continued)***

This gave the ministry the training, some tools and a trailer to begin functioning as a viable group of servants. One should note that all of our participating members have donated use of personal tools, money, and transportation. These gifts are in addition to the seed money provided through the budget.

The following services were provided over the past four months. They were:

- A Grace member's property after a wild fire - 85 Hours expended
- F2 disaster recovery for 5 Grace members - 255 Hours expended
- Mayfield, KY Hope Initiative F4 recovery - 700 Hours expended

These hours include travel, work and stay over when required. The total number of Grace LDR members participating was 19, and some of these gave up vacation and personal leave time as they were away from work and family. Thanks be to God for their willingness to serve Him and others in need during disasters. In addition, there were three members of Sheppard of the Hills from Crossville serving with us, and they have requested to serve with us during future deployments.

As we look forward to 2024 and beyond, we are basically prepared and ready to serve after a disaster within our district and general area. It is not known how many deployments will occur, as natural disasters happen at unknown times. **We will require some additional equipment and will travel to unknown destinations.** Thank you Grace Church for your support of this new serving ministry, serving those in need, as the Holy Spirit moves **all of us to care for those afflicted by showing them mercy through Jesus Christ.**

I close with this invitation, that you too can be a part of this ministry by volunteering to serve, *God does and will continue to help those that are afflicted. Through us his love is shared and hope is delivered! We show we are Christians by our love!*

*In Christ's Service  
Your Grace Lutheran Disaster Response Team  
Larry Belt*

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## ***Grace Prayer Team Welcomes Requests***

**T**he Grace Prayer Team is constantly at work! If you have a prayer request that you would like prayed over by the Grace Prayer Team, we welcome your requests. Please contact **Kristin McGee** at [kdmcgee08@gmail.com](mailto:kdmcgee08@gmail.com) (865-384-9834) or **Ev Brown** ([evbrown3@gmail.com](mailto:evbrown3@gmail.com) (757-870-5603)). The request will then be passed on to the team. We continue to welcome Prayer Team members as well. If you are interested in praying for the needs submitted by our church family, please contact Kristin or Ev with your interest.



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Articles for GraceNet are due by the **10th of each month**  
for the  
following month's edition.

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*If you have a special event you would like to have publicized in GraceNet, please submit the information to Debbie Booher by the 10th of each month for publication in the following month's newsletter.*



*Please join us on*  
**Sunday, January 7, 2024**  
*at 4:00 p.m.*  
*for the*  
**Installation of**  
**Pastor Danny Anderson**  
**as Senior Pastor of**  
**Grace Lutheran Church.**

*Installation service will be followed by a dinner.*

### **AARP Tax-Aide**

**T**his is the second tax season that Grace Lutheran Church will be hosting an AARP Tax-Aide site for free preparation and e-filing of federal and state individual income tax returns.

This site will be managed by Allen Schultz, who has volunteered with the Tax-Aide program for 16 years. The program always needs more volunteers to help taxpayers with their tax filing requirements. The program provides all the training necessary to provide this service. No prior knowledge of taxes or experience in this field is needed. If interested or have questions, please contact Allen (865-947-0334) or sign up at [www.volunteers.aarp.org](http://www.volunteers.aarp.org).

AARP membership is not required to volunteer for this program or to participate in having your tax return prepared. The Tax-Aide program is national in scope, therefore, this site will be open to the greater Knoxville community.

Operating days for this site are planned for Tuesdays from February 6 to April 9, 2024. Contact information for phone or website arranged appointments will be published in January 2024.



### **Lutheran Women in Mission**

#### **LWML Ladies,**

Please plan to join us on **Saturday, January 13**, at 10:00 a.m. for the installation of our new LWML Officers for 2024-2026. We welcome Mary Krempasky as our new President and Deanne Collins as Vice President. Pastor Jake will join us to officially install them into these positions of service and to recognize all the volunteers who keep our mission efforts going with the help of God. Following the installation, we will do some planning for our goals and events for 2024!



DCE Intern

**Matthew McCarthy**

will be installed on

**Sunday, January 7, 2024**

at the **9:30 a.m.** service.

We are excited to have Matthew join us at Grace!

# JANUARY

## Birthdays

1/1	Randi Ray	1/19	Laurie Martin
1/1	Allen Scraggs	1/20	Robin Carow
1/3	Bob Miller	1/20	Michael Dodson
1/3	Kristi Tunstall	1/21	Carolyn Beech
1/4	Karl Kennedy	1/21	Jennifer Malone
1/4	Jack McGee	1/22	Linda Dreke
1/6	Jon Treffert	1/23	Lisa Smith
1/8	Sandie Harjala	1/24	Tracey Testerman
1/8	Jim Stoddard	1/25	Bill Brye
1/10	Lynn Ware	1/25	Deborah Stegner
1/11	Janis Wold	1/27	Barbara Collet
1/12	Tiffany Hoppe	1/27	Jerry Geithman
1/13	Lee Baker	1/27	Randy Heath
1/14	Shawna Hembree	1/28	Anna Wilson
1/15	Sandra Beeler	1/29	Rosalyn Turner
1/16	Tiffani Aanestad	1/30	Peter Early
1/16	Kristin McGee	1/30	Annabelle McCay
1/18	Laura Sikora		

# JANUARY

## Anniversaries

1/12	Marlene & Jerry Landon
1/17	Kenny & Holly Blankenship
1/19	David & Denise Hart
1/28	Glen & Carmita Wright
1/31	Pastor Danny & Sarah Anderson

### Coffee or Lunch with Pastor Danny?

**P**astor Danny would like to share a cup of coffee or meal with you—no strings attached! You can sign up to meet with Pastor Danny at:

<https://calendly.com/pastordannygraceknoxville/breakfast-lunch-meeting>

### With Thanks and Gratitude

**O**ur dear brother Gary Schneider has recently completed radiation treatments, five days per week, to kill his benign brain tumor at UT Hospital, and we would like to thank the following people for volunteering to drive him to and from these treatments: Dennis Lane-man, Craig Emerson, Jim O'Hatnick, Jack McGee, John Stegner, Byron Mahan, Jim Brown, Paul Pankow, Mel Beech, Larry Belt, Tom Klindt, and Larry Granquist. We are grateful for all the help you all have given!

### Bible Quiz

**I**n the book of Judges, the warrior Barak would go to battle only if a certain female leader went with him. Who was she?

- A. Rebekah
- B. Jael
- C. Michal
- D. Deborah



Answer: D (See Judges 4:1-10)



**January 6, 2024**

### January Scripture of the Month

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold the new has come.*

~ 2 Corinthians 5:17, ESV



## January Children’s Curriculum Themes

**I**n an attempt to connect the adults and children of Grace just a bit more, I will be letting people know the theme and verse of the week in our children’s Sunday school classes. I would love it if the adults would join in memorizing or at least talking about it to the children as they see each other in the halls. Listed below are the themes and scripture for January .

~ Frieda Guthrie

<i><b>DATE</b></i>	<i><b>THEME</b></i>	<i><b>VERSE</b></i>
January 7	<b>God sent Jesus.</b>	<i>For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)</i>
January 14	<b>Jesus knows all about us.</b>	<i>O Lord, You have searched me and You Know me. (Psalm 139:1)</i>
January 21	<b>Follow Jesus.</b>	<i>“Come, follow Me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.” (Mark 1:17)</i>
January 28	<b>Jesus is all powerful.</b>	<i>For I am convinced that neither life nor death, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)</i>



## Operation Christmas Child

**T**hank you to everyone who participated in Operation Christmas Child this year. We collected 1,827 boxes and received over \$1,300 for the ministry. This is a year-long effort for children around the world who would not otherwise receive gifts for Christmas. Please consider filling a shoebox(es) during 2024 to bless a child. If you don’t want to fill the box yourself, you can contribute funds for a box and we’ll fill it for you. If you don’t know what to put in a box, there’s information in the Children’s wing on suggestions for items. If you have questions, please don’t hesitate to contact Frieda Guthrie at [childrensmin@visitgrace.org](mailto:childrensmin@visitgrace.org) or Paul Guthrie at [pgvint3@gmail.com](mailto:pgvint3@gmail.com).



## Where Are You Going?

Often God steers us in new directions. We are attracted, guided and then taken into a serving experience which builds God's mission. Please pray about responding to either or both of the mission experiences planned by Grace.

### *English Learning for Immigrants at Pelican Lutheran Church, Naples, Florida*

For two years some members of Grace have been traveling to Naples, Florida to help Pelican Lutheran Church teach English to immigrants. Please consider joining the group going to Naples. The classes will take place June 24-28, 2024.

### *Child Beyond Orphanage Ministry in Guatemala*

Child Beyond is an orphanage ministry in Guatemala that Grace has been supporting. We are recruiting a team of Grace members to do a project in Guatemala for the orphanage and their ministry. Please consider volunteering. The group will serve in Guatemala from July 14-21, 2024.

Please prayerfully consider serving in one or both of these ministries. For more information, please contact Rev. Paul Muench.

## Sarah Parrish, Costa Rica Giving Thanks

*New Mission for Christ Network (MCN) Partner, Sarah Parrish put together a "wall of pictures" of family and friends who she says "have consistently supported me in this journey." Sarah joined the MCN team in Costa Rica in September.*

During a recent online Spanish class, my teacher and I were talking about how my *[sic]* preparing to write a newsletter. She said, "Sarah why don't you just talk about thankfulness." Even as I've been experiencing some of the trials of mission work, I have been so blessed to have great reminders like this one from my Spanish teacher. She went on to say that even in the midst of struggles and hardship, there are blessings all around. What a great reminder of how God uses all kinds of circumstances to grow and strengthen us.

Although it was so tough at Thanksgiving to experience my first holiday away from home, I am amazed at God's faithfulness and how He has provided for me since the very beginning of this journey. A few weeks ago, I took the time to hang up all of the printout pictures I brought with me from the States. Pictures of so many friends and family who have consistently supported me in this journey. Each day as I wake up and see my wall of pictures, I am overwhelmed by the smiling faces who hold a very special place in my heart and who I miss so much. I am also reminded of all those who are not pictured but have also made a lasting impact on my life, and I am ever grateful for them. I am thankful beyond words for all those who God has placed in my life. I know that I never walk alone in this journey. Thank you, God!

## New VIA de CRISTO Weekend Coming

April 18-21, 2024



Please check out the bulletin board across from the church mailboxes for details of the new VIA de CRISTO weekend coming up on April 18-21, 2024. You may also ask some of the many Grace members who have been through this special life experience:

Sheila/Paul Wittke  
Pastor Rich Elseroad  
Pastor Steve/Freddy Skov  
Don/Nancy Thaemert  
Chris/Dina Augustus

Craig/Chris Emerson  
John/Chris McCay  
Dan Wilson  
Roland Thompson  
Others

What is VIA de CRISTO? It is a Spanish phrase meaning "Way of Christ." VIA de CRISTO is a method of living your Christian faith as a life style. It begins with a structured three-day weekend designed to strengthen and renew the faith of Christian people and bring them to a new awareness of living in God's grace. It is a combined effort of lay people and clergy toward renewal of the church. VIA de CRISTO is the Lutheran expression of other three-day Cursillo based movements. However, VIA de CRISTO is inter-denominational and welcomes any and all Christians to attend. This is an international movement through all walks of life.

## *In the Beginning Was the Word*

**W**e read, “In the beginning was the Word...” and probably do not suspect all that is behind it. In summary, it is personified and refers to the creative intelligence that made and sustains the universe. As you continue reading John 1 you learn this creative intelligence Who always existed, always was took on flesh and became our Redeemer. Our Creator is also our Redeemer, is Jesus. The Word was a concept familiar to both Jews and Greeks, even if slightly different in the understanding of both. Because Word was familiar to both groups, John’s Gospel could better find an audience with both.

“Word” translates ‘Logos.’ While “Word” is an accurate literal translation, it also misses so much more that is a part of ‘Logos.’ “Logos” is more than a vocable, like “tree” or “love” or “day.” As Greeks like Aristotle understood the ‘Logos,’ it referred to ordered discourse that is part of a carefully argued presentation. For the Stoics it came to be the divine reasoning that put the universe in order. “In Greek thought, the logos was the rational principle guiding the universe and making life coherent.”\*

Philo was an educated Jew and a philosopher from Alexandria born about twenty years before Jesus and dying about forty years after Jesus’ ministry on earth. He was acquainted with Stoicism and easily connected it with God’s Wisdom in the creation of all things when He called all things into being by the power of His spoken Word. “For Jewish people, the Logos was the word of the Lord, an expression of God’s wisdom and creative power. By Jesus’ time, the Logos was viewed as coming from God and having His personality (see Ps 33:6, 9; Prov 8:22-31); John affirmed this understanding (John 1:14).”\*

In John 1:3 we read that all created things were made through the ‘Logos.’ That is repeated in verse 10. Verses 11 and 12 identify the One Who created as the One Who also redeems and gives authority to be children of God. (John uses the word “son” for Jesus, but “children” for us.) Yet, many do not recognize Him and do not receive Him or what He offers.

This One Who created and redeems became flesh and identified with those whom He created. In our English Bibles we read that He dwelt among us. The verb used means to pitch a tent. The Old Testament usage of that verb is important. In the Greek Septuagint (Old Testament) known to most by virtue of the conquests of Alexander the Great that spread the Greek language across the empire that word refers to the Tabernacle, or Tent of Meeting where God, Himself came to be present with His people. Jesus is the presence of God among us. He is the Word.

*\*(The NLT Study Bible [Kindle edition], notes on John 1:1) See also “Word, the” in the Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible, (Nashville: Abingdon), Vol. 4.*

~ Rev. Phil Bohlken

### *HealthLine*

**P**lease note that everything written in this column will be backed by research, various studies and facts. There will be no personal opinions.

~ Sheila Wittke



### *Common Artificial Sweetener Linked to Heart Attack and Stroke*

**E**rythritol, a popular artificial sweetener used in low-calorie, low-carb and “keto” products increases the risk of heart attack and stroke. In a study of more than 4,000 men and women, researchers at the Cleveland Clinic found those with higher blood levels of the artificial sweetener Erythritol were at increased risk of a major cardiac event. Their research determined that Erythritol made it easier for cell fragments to clump together and form clots. Senior author Stanley Hazen, M.D., Ph.D., said “Our study shows that when participants consumed an artificially sweetened beverage with an amount of Erythritol found in many processed foods, markedly elevated levels of Erythritol in the blood are observed for days and these levels are well above those enhance clotting risks.” Studies have shown that many artificial sweeteners are combined with Erythritol to enhance the flavor of many processed foods.

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Sunday Worship: 8:00 a.m. (Traditional) and  
9:30 a.m. (Blended)/11:00 a.m. (Contemporary)

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

TO:



**Connect ~ Grow ~ Serve**



*PRAYING YOU'LL SEE THE BLESSINGS OF GOD'S PLANS THIS NEW YEAR!!*