

Grace Lutheran Church  
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Food Pantry: 609-927-9982

## Messenger February-March 2025

### Annual Congregational Meeting

Our Annual Congregational Meeting is Sunday, February 2, 2025 following the 10:15 AM Worship Service. If you are unable to attend in person, please join us on Zoom:

[https://us05web.zoom.us/j/81752108457  
pwd=C85WMzaWY2XBvzyQVgaSx36Fa3g21g.1](https://us05web.zoom.us/j/81752108457?pwd=C85WMzaWY2XBvzyQVgaSx36Fa3g21g.1)

Meeting ID: 817 5210 8457

Passcode: GraceSPNJ

Extra meeting packets will be available in the church office. Please stop by the church office to pick one up if you are unable to attend in person.

The names of the 2025 Grace Church Council officers and representatives will be printed in the bulletin on Sunday, February 9th.

### From the Pastor's desk...

It's Superbowl time! I've only begun watching football since two things happened...

One, my husband explained the rules. If you don't know what a "down" is, the game doesn't make any sense. You won't know why they get four plays to get ten

### Staff at Grace

Rev. Wendolyn Trozzo, Interim Pastor  
Scott J. Breiner, Music Director  
Corinne Rhodes, Administrative Assistant  
Heidi Toth, Church Treasurer  
Ruth Bowden, Sandy Piskun, Financial Secretaries

Joseph Martin, Church Council President  
Mary Goodman, Church Council Vice President  
Dale Kredatus, Church Council Secretary  
Alison Toth, Social Media Consultant

yards, or why play stops when a player's knee is down. Football was an unintelligible mystery to me for decades, and I couldn't get why it was such a big deal to people.

Two, our older son got interested in football after playing it in high school gym class. He had grown up in Malaysia and had never watched or played football. In gym class, he was like Forrest Gump: he could catch, and he could run, but he didn't know which end zone to aim for. His team literally had to point the way so he wouldn't score for the other team. Now he gets the Madden computer game every December and over the holiday we watched a lot of football together. (Go University of Akron Zips! Go Birds!)

Now football is a part of our household. And of course when something is important enough to bring a family together, it can also be applied to something as important as our faith. So ...

One, the things of faith can seem unintelligible to people who feel outside of it. Like knowing what a "down" is in football, we can teach others what faith is, or grace, or who God is as Creator, Savior, and Friend. Things about Church that bring us joy and meaning in life might give others understanding of their life and what it means to be loved by God and by neighbor.

Two, it took a community to get Dante and me interested in football. For someone to become passionate about something, they need a community around them. We are that community for each other, and for those near us. We are the gathering place, not to see a game, but to see what God is doing among us and through us. Communities are really good at pointing the way to their sports teams or favorite restaurants – to the gathering places. We need to be creative and passionate about pointing people to God's law and God's love.

I still feel a little ambivalent about football – it's a sport that puts bodies and brains in significant danger. (Watch the 2013 movie *Concussion* to see what I mean.) And plenty of people feel ambivalent about Church – about its history (dark moments of colonization, racism, and scandals that were hidden rather than healed), about what the heck communion is (cannibalism?, people ask), about why so many Christians seem to be all talk. The Church isn't perfect, and doesn't claim to be. We need to keep having conversations about the things that make us squirm, so that we can make changes that will bless our gathering and all the people that we seek to reach.

Whether you watch the Superbowl and/or the Puppy Bowl (my favorite part!), please join us in our "Souper-bowl of Caring" on February 9. Bring a can of soup or other food pantry donations so that we can help others be blessed by our passionate faith and our loving Church!

In Christ,  
Pastor Wendolyn

## **The Wildfires remind us...**

Disaster can happen to anyone. One simple step that every person should do is to talk with their loved ones to set a meeting point and a back-up meeting point, should they be separated in a time of chaos. If a flood swept through town and the electric grid/phone lines were down, if you couldn't get home, where would you meet? Church could be one such place, or a home in a nearby town. No plans will meet every emergency, but having some plans in place may do the most important thing of connecting you with your loved ones. You can learn more about disaster preparedness at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) or through the Red Cross.

## **WELCA**

Thank you to all who donated hats, gloves, and mittens for local children in need this winter. We collected 26 hats, 19 pairs of gloves, 9 hat & glove sets, 1 pair of mittens, and 4 pairs of hand-knit mittens, which were donated to Northfield Elementary School.

The food items for the month of March being collected for our Food Pantry are condiments, particularly mayonnaise, ketchup, and mustard.

## **Sponsorships for Altar Flowers and Other Worship Items**

The 2025 sponsorship charts are available for sign-up on the downstairs bulletin board across from the elevator. You may sign-up or call the church office and let us know what dates and items you would like to sponsor. The items and cost are as follows:

Flowers (\$30), Candles (\$10), Wine (10), Bulletins (\$15), Music (\$50), and Messenger (\$50)

## **Support Committee-Giving With Grace**

In the last episode we discussed the gift of **Appreciated Securities**. Gifts of appreciated Securities enjoy a double tax bonus, that of an immediate charitable deduction, and avoidance of capital gains. Let's move on to....

### **Tangible Personal Property :**

Property can be classified as Real or Personal. Real property is land, buildings and anything that is permanently attached to those buildings. Personal property then is everything else that we own. Tangible as opposed to intangible property is that which we can touch. (We have already discussed intangible assets in our discussion about Appreciated Securities.)

Antiques, rare books, prized collections of art or baseball cards are some of the items of personal property that can be given to Grace. From the sublime to the ridiculous, any gift that can be valued, can be gifted. When the gift is valued the **Fair Market Value** of the gift is deductible as a charitable gift. It would be your job to provide the valuation; but once established, that is the value of your charitable gift deduction.

**Fair Market Value** as defined by the Internal Revenue Tax Code is “a willing buyer and a willing seller, neither the buyer or the seller being under any compulsion to buy or sell, exchange assets.” The point is not to find a buyer but only establish the value for which the item would sell, if offered.

As with all tax and investment advice, before you adopt any strategy outlined in these discussions, you should consult your own tax and financial advisors as to how the strategy fits into your own situation.

**February Worship Assistants:**

2/2 Edna Cordery  
2/9 June Jordan  
2/16 Kevin Thomas  
2/23 James Ehrhardt

**March Worship Assistants:**

3/2 Ruth Bowden  
3/9 Shirley B./Corinne R.  
3/16 Meg Markkanen  
3/23 Meg La Spina  
3/30 Mary Ann Gring

**Up-Coming Events**

**February 9: Super Bowl of Caring** – Bring a can of soup to church for Grace Place Food Pantry, and place in the designated area. Soups other than tomato, chicken noodle, and chicken and rice would be most appreciated.

**February 14: Bring Your Heart to Grace – 6:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall:**  
Dinner & Movie “The Sound of Hope”  
Donation Drive for children in foster care.  
Please pick up a flier in the narthex and spread the word!

**March 5: Ash Wednesday, March 5, 7:00 PM:**

What does the “Very Hungry Caterpillar” teach us about faith? Come and find out. Pastor Wendolyn shared this sermon at a Church in Maryland a few years ago and heard from several people, “I always did Ash Wednesday but now I feel like I really understand what it’s about.”

There will also be a noon Bible study and 1pm service at St. John’s led by “Rev Kev.”

**Lenten Mid-Week Gatherings – Partnering with St. John’s in Ocean City**

**Thursday Bread & Broth**

**6:00 PM Potluck Dinner & Fellowship Followed by Short Worship Service:**

**March 13** (St. John’s, O.C.), **March 20** (Grace, S.P.), **March 27** (St. John’s, O.C.), **April 3** (Grace, S.P.), **April 10** (St. John’s, O.C.)

Sign-up sheets for bringing food will be available.

**Friday, March 14: St. Patrick’s Day Potluck—Irish Foods, Games & Fun**

# Happy Birthday

## February

2/1 Colette Estrada  
2/3 John Sandtorp  
2/3 Carole Trautz  
2/5 Jim Foreman  
2/5 Frank Golden  
2/6 Evelyn Lushear  
2/7 Deborah Schafer  
2/9 Sally Stieska  
2/12 Kathy Ruffenach  
2/15 Clare Brick  
2/17 Linda Corradetti  
2/19 Joe Bilello  
2/22 Jim Ehrhardt  
2/22 Kathy Wopatek-Nigsch  
2/25 Karan Kredatus  
2/26 Jim Cordery

## March

3/3 Eric Horrox  
3/5 Jeff Toth  
3/8 Michael Berenotto, Jr.  
3/11 Sandy Piskun  
3/16 Charlie Bowden  
3/19 Bob Klingensmith  
3/23 Bonnie Condliff  
3/23 Gay Rowland  
3/25 Joe Martin  
3/27 Meg La Spina  
3/28 Aud Suckiel  
3/30 Maureen Dewees-Kahn  
3/31 Andrew Ehrhardt  
3/31 Kristin horrox

# HAPPY Anniversary!

## February

2/9 Maureen Dewees-Kahn  
2/9 Helen Flamm  
2/11 Bonnie & David Condliff  
2/28 Kathy & Joe Ruffenach

## March

3/25 Deborah & Gary Schafer