



PARISH NEWS

Grace Lutheran Church, Hatfield PA
Rev. Nancy M. Raabe, Pastor

April 2025

To Glorify God ♦ To Grow in Faith ♦ To Give in Service ♦ Together in Christ

www.gracelutheranhatfield.org

Join us for Holy Week and Easter!

Palm Sunday, April 13 at 8 & 10:30 a.m.

Maundy Thursday, April 17 at 7:30 p.m.

Good Friday, April 18 at 12 noon and 7:30 p.m.

Easter Sunday April 20:

Easter Brunch from 9:15-10:15 a.m.,
Festival of the Resurrection, 8 & 10:30 a.m.

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Each of our Holy Week services promises something special. On Palm Sunday (10:30 service only) we will of course sing "The Palms" and then experience the Passion gospel in Luke read by a variety of voices. Maundy Thursday invites us into a modified Stations of the Cross which includes selected hymns that reflect on the readings. At noon on Good Friday we'll remember Jesus' "Seven Last Words from the Cross" and at 7:30 p.m. we'll experience Tenebrae as a "Good Friday service of light and darkness." Easter morning features trumpets, plenty of festivity, with an Easter breakfast at 9:15. All are welcome!



Pastor's Column: THIS JOYFUL EASTERTIDE

"Had Christ, who once was slain, not burst his three-day prison," we sing in the exuberant Easter hymn of this name (ELW 391), "our faith had been in vain. But now has Christ arisen, arisen, arisen, ari----sen!"

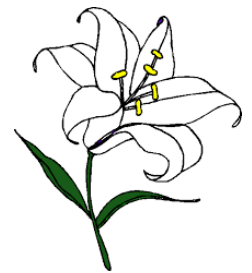


We will meet this hymn on Easter Sunday. George Woodward's text comes from 1 Corinthians 15, Paul's great "Resurrection" chapter. In 15:14 Paul lays it on the line to the church in Corinth: "And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith." Without Jesus' death and resurrection, without Good Friday and Easter, he would have been just another prophet. But the Resurrection is real. It really, truly happened. It is even mentioned as having taken place by Josephus, a Roman historian writing in the late first century AD. I have a copy of his great book and I can show you where Josephus documents Jesus being raised.

This is news—this is good news! It was good news then and it still is today. And news needs to be told!

Jesus was not resuscitated, in the manner of Lazarus in John 11, who was brought back to life but who eventually died as all humans do. That is, Jesus did not resume a life after his resurrection in which he was still subject to death. He had *transcended* death. He was no longer captive to its power. Paul testifies in Romans 6:9, “We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.”

In this way, God responds to the “NO” of our sin, as we continually turn away from God – by saying “YES” to us and to all creation. Even with all our waywardness, our cruelty whether intentional or not, our disruption of divine systems of God’s good creation, our disruption of human systems designed to help people and especially those who are vulnerable -- even with our lack of compassion, our inability to feel empathy, our obstinacy — even so, Jesus is risen! And not because of anything that we have done. In fact, the opposite. While we keep doing things that show us to be unworthy of God’s gift of life, love, and forgiveness, God keeps giving them anyway. That is grace! What wondrous love is this, O my soul!



Moreover, this is good news of the Christian gospel is good news *for us*. A simple illustration might help. You know how at a carnival you trade in tickets you somehow have acquired for prizes? It’s much the same: Through the death of his God, God has bought us back and for the greatest prize ever – the eternal life of Christ’s living presence, now and forever. In his newly constituted body, the resurrected Jesus is with us in a way that only faith can understand. At the same time this great act of redemption shatters the power of all the earthly obstacles that try separate us from God. I dare to say the biggest of these is the idea that we are unworthy. Wrong! Each of us is worthy, no matter what – regardless of “what we have done [or] what we have left undone.”

You may find this hard to fathom or even to believe. This is where the church comes in. The church is the body of Christ in the world. Just as you need your physical body to experience life on earth, you need Christ’s body as the church to know life in Christ. Through the church faith is nurtured and strengthened. Through the church the good news of forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life are proclaimed. Through the church, members of the body of Christ are equipped to become the *means* of grace, agents of salvation for others. Through our liturgy and song, through our preaching and teaching, through the words we speak and the works of our hands that arise from our faith, the Christian gospel is spread in our families, through our towns, across the nation, and around the world. This is how God’s kingdom breaks in.

So why do we bother with Holy Week? Why not just jump straight to Easter and forget about all that sad stuff?

Because in the Christian story there is no resurrection without death, just as there can be no true joy without lament. And Christ’s death needed to be a certain kind of death: It had to be a humiliation deep enough to encompass all the forms of suffering that humans must endure in a world where people purposely inflict pain on others. The startling reality of our faith is that it was *on the cross* that God chose to reveal God’s self fully to us—hidden in the form the one despised and rejected by the world, the one who suffered just as we do so that we may come to know this crucified God in our own suffering.

What kind of God do we see there? A God who loves us so much that he was willing to enter into a world of pain and suffer the worst of what human beings can do to each other, so that he can be with us in the worst that we must endure. A God who, in life’s darkest moments, tells us that death is not the end and that the promise of eternal life is real; a God whose victory over death is an actual, actual sign that this promise is true;

a God whose power is revealed in weakness, one whose death brings life through death. Here on the cross, only faith is able to recognize God in the crucified Christ. Here on the cross, as Martin Luther wrote, we see Christ as the very mirror of the Father's heart.

Therefore, I encourage you to enter fully into the Easter story this year. Don't take a shortcut to Easter Sunday. Share in the grand procession of palms on April 13 that greets Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, and grasp—in the same service—the truth of what awaits Jesus at the end of that "Via Dolorosa." Participate in the Lord's Supper on Maundy Thursday, April 17, as we remember Jesus' own Last Supper and embrace the commitment to love and acts of service he showed the disciples, knowing all that was coming the next day. Experience the reality of Jesus' death on the cross on Good Friday through powerful hymns and a service that concludes in darkness. Awake on Sunday and be astonished, once again, by the earth-shattering news of Easter. Then let's all go and share this good news!

Yours in Resurrection hope,

Pasta Normy Raabe



Grace Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday April 12,

2:00 PM, Toddlers to age 12, Rain or Shine

Candy and plastic egg donations needed for the Grace Easter Egg Hunt.

Please place donations of wrapped candy and plastic eggs in the Narthex. Last day to donate is April 6, and plan to stay after the 10:30 service April 6 to help fill the plastic eggs.

Easter Breakfast

Once again, we will be having an Easter breakfast between the services on Easter Sunday. Come and enjoy some social time with your fellow Grace members. All are welcome. We are looking for volunteers to help with set-up (the day before), to help serve the food (buffet style, no actual cooking involved), and to help clean up after the 10:30 service. Please sign up in the narthex or contact Cathy Farrell (cifarrell@comcast.net) to help.



STEPPING STONES

Just another great month here at Stepping Stones while we welcome new faces, fill our baby room, and get back to being outside more regularly! April is a fun month this time around with Easter coming on the 20th; we will be closed for Good Friday on April 18th but the Easter Bunny will be stopping by on 4/17 to hide some eggs and take some photos with the kiddos. With the Summer approaching we are also looking for plastic bag donations...we go through quite a few around here and water play makes the need even greater. If you have any plastic grocery bags at home that you don't need, we'd be happy to take them off your hands!

Jessica Moran, Director

WELCA

Ladies, our next meeting will be on April 2nd and we will be doing Easter cards for our Homebound members. Please bring cards with you, not sure if we have any left at church. Hope to see you. Take care and stay healthy. Barb

EMBRACING LAMENT IN OUR LENTEN JOURNEY: Lenten community worship with the churches of Hatfield

We hope to see as many Grace members as possible at this annual series, which this year explores the psalms of lament. **All services are at 7:30 p.m. and include a reception afterward.** April 2: "Individual Lament," here at Grace. Bring something for the reception! April 9, "Communal Lament," at the Church of the Brethren.



Over the past months, our congregation has held several joint services with Faith Lutheran Church, who are just down Cowpath Road. Some of their members have been volunteering at our Soup Suppers for several months now.

Council feels this is a good time to meet with Faith's leadership to explore other potential partnerships and get to know each other better. We welcome any ideas for developing our relationship with the people of Faith Lutheran.

April 2025 Serving Schedule

Date	Altar Guild	Communion Assistant	Lector	Acolyte	Ushers	Coffee Hour
4/06/25 8:00 am 10:30 am	L. Kratz K. Stone & T. Sarm	K. Seiler F. Stone	R. Smyrl J. Shaffer	Usher Usher	R. Smyrl & D. Ball K. Stone & L. Boyer	Ken Seiler
4/13/25 8:00 am 10:30 am Palm Sunday	L. Kratz K. Stone & T. Sarm	D. Kunkel L. Kaler	K. Seiler J. Kaler	Usher Usher	The Seilers J. Kaler & K. Stawasz	Don Capanear
4/17/25 7:30 pm Maundy Thurs		L. Boyer	J. Shaffer	Usher	B. Schmidt & C. MacDonald	N/A
4/18/25 12:00 noon 7:30 pm Good Friday	TBD N/A	N/A N/A	B. Hess P. Schmidt	Usher Usher	M.J. Moyer K. Deussing & B. Schmidt	N/A
4/20/25 8:00 am 10:30 am Easter Sunday	L. Kratz K. Stone & T. Sarm	B. Schmidt C. Farrell	The Walters The Sluggs	Usher Usher	The Walters The Sluggs	N/A
4/27/25 8:00 am 10:30 am (baptism)	L. Kratz K. Stone & T. Sarm	K. Seiler J. Kaler	K. Seiler J. Kaler	Usher L. Kaler	D. Capanear & D. Kunkel K. Heacock & K. Deussing	Pastor Raabe

Council Offering/Lock-up for April 2025 is: 8:00 am, Dave Kunkel; 10:30 am, Jeff Krout
Live Streaming: Harold Schaefer, Dan & Tami Sarm

April 2025 Calendar

- The Jesus Love Church (formerly Central Philadelphia) will be worshipping on Sundays at 12:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary and Friday night worship at 8:00 pm.
- Tues. are Bread Drop Sandwich Days. Donations are accepted from 8am-7pm.
- Wednesdays at 6:15 pm is Yoga in Fellowship Hall

Tues Apr 1, 2025	7:00pm	Stitchers
Wed Apr 2, 2025	10:00am	WELCA Meeting
	7:30pm	Lenten Community Service <u>at Grace, with reception to follow</u>
Thurs Apr 3, 2025	5:30pm	Thursday Soup Supper
Sun Apr 6, 2025	8:00am	Worship -- Fifth Sunday in Lent
	10:30am	Worship (Sunday School) – Fifth Sunday in Lent
Tues Apr 8, 2025	7:00pm	Worship & Music Team Meeting
	7:00pm	Property Team Meeting
Wed Apr 9, 2025	7:30pm	Lenten Community Service
Thurs Apr 10, 2025	5:30pm	Thursday Soup Supper
	7:00pm	Stepping Stones Committee Meeting, via Zoom
Sat April 12, 2025	2:00pm	Annual Grace Easter Egg Hunt
Sun Apr 13, 2025	8:00am	Worship—Palm Sunday
	10:30am	Worship (Sunday School)—Palm Sunday
Tues Apr 15, 2025	7:00pm	Council Meeting, Zoom option
Thurs Apr 17, 2025	5:30pm	Thursday Soup Supper
	7:30pm	Maundy Thursday Worship Service
Fri Apr 18, 2025		<i>Office and Stepping Stones CLOSED for Good Friday</i>
	12:00 noon	Good Friday Worship Service
	7:30pm	Good Friday Worship Service
Sun Apr 20, 2025	8:00am	Worship—EASTER SUNDAY
	9:15am	Easter Sunday Breakfast
	10:30am	Worship—EASTER SUNDAY
Tues Apr 22, 2025	6:30pm	INreach Meeting
Thurs Apr 24, 2025	5:30pm	Thursday Soup Supper
Sun Apr 27, 2025	8:00am	Worship
	10:30am	Worship (Sunday School)
		<i>Baptism</i>



THE BREAD DROP schedule for April 2025 is: 4/1/25 Priscilla Landis; 4/8/25 Laura Kratz; 4/15/25 Jean Delmuto; 4/22/25 Emily Woltmann; 4/29/25 Karen Seiler



Rice Bowl Project continues through Palm Sunday, April 13th

What is the Rice Bowl? During each Sunday in Lent a special offering is observed for the Rice Bowl. These gifts provide food for many in our neighborhood as well as around the world. **In your offering envelope box, special envelopes are provided for each of the six Sundays in Lent.** If you don't have Grace envelopes, plain envelopes are available in the narthex.

Our gifts will be shared with three organizations:

Hatfield Food Cupboard at Emmanuel Evangelical Congregational Church which provides food to those in need in the Hatfield area.

Manna on Main Street in Lansdale which provides food and hot meals for those in the Lansdale area.

World Hunger Project through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America which provides education and food for people around the globe.

It is our hope that you will consider giving your extra gifts by simplifying your life in some way or by making an intentional effort to put others before your needs and wants. The **Rice Bowl** allows small gifts to come together to make a big difference in the lives of those in need. The *Giving in Service Team* encourages you to share part of your grocery budget by serving one simple meal a week and give that savings to the **Rice Bowl**.

Since the year 2020, Grace members have given a **TOTAL of \$11,913** to help our neighbors near and far.

The **Hatfield Food Cupboard** provides help to people in Hatfield who need food. Shoppers at the Food Cupboard may pick out the foods they need for their family. Our church members donate food to the Hatfield Food Cupboard throughout the year. Our monetary gift allows the Food Cupboard to purchase food items they need, especially when supplies are low.

Manna Kitchen prepares and distributes to-go meals every day for anyone in need. **Monday – Thursday: 10am – 2pm** **Friday – Sunday: 10am – 1pm**

Manna serves a sit-down meal four days per week for anyone in need. **Monday – Thursday: 4:30pm – 6pm**

In addition, Manna provides in-person or online shopping for those who qualify.

Visit their website to see more information about what Manna does. <https://mannaonmain.org>

Through World Hunger your gifts can help people in need around the globe.

ELCA World Hunger is uniquely positioned to reach communities in need. From health clinics to microloans, water wells to animal husbandry, community meals to advocacy, your gifts to ELCA World Hunger make it possible for the ELCA to respond, supporting sustainable solutions that get at the root causes of hunger and poverty.



EEC FOOD CUPBOARD

An update from Janet Hague: "Emmanuel's Food Cupboard continues to be busy, both for distribution and in preparation for distribution. Over a dozen volunteers are involved monthly to package produce, stock shelves, receive deliveries, and help the shoppers who come on Tuesdays. In February 2024, 80 families visited our food cupboard; in February of this year 97 families came, with new people signing in almost every week. Thank you for your faithful support of this ministry!"

Current Needs:

Food items: Cereal, Condiments (mustard, ketchup, mayonnaise), Baked Beans, Pasta Sauce

Household & Personal Care*: Shampoo & Conditioner (with caps securely taped on!), Razors & Shaving Cream

Gift Cards: Grocery gift cards are always welcome and very helpful, especially ALDI & Giant!

Your non-perishable donations can be placed in our Grace narthex bins by the conference room and they will be brought to the EEC when bins are full.

Upcoming distribution dates & times:

Tuesdays 5:30 - 6:30 pm: April 1, 15, 29

Tuesdays 1 - 2 pm: April 8, 22

The food cupboard is open to all Hatfield borough residents, so please reach out if you, or someone you know, would benefit from receiving supplemental food/household items. Messages for Janet Hague can be left at 215-855-2540; foodcupboard@yahoo.com.



Prayer List

The full list is now published Parish News, while the list in Grace Notes (weekly newsletter) includes prayers only for Grace members and immediate family rather than including extended family and friends. Please submit requests to Lynn Fasick at graceassistant40@gmail.com, specify whether the need is “ongoing” or “current,” and notify her if and when the name may be removed from the list. Thank you!

PRAYER LIST

Please let Pastor Raabe or Lynn know if you would like someone added to this list, or if someone you have added is no longer in need of urgent prayers.

In Need of Ongoing Prayers: Liz Bauer, Suzanne Colville, Bob Kaler, Peggy Long, Hazel Mascaro, Jerry Mascaro, Bob Rufe (Mary Jane Moyer’s brother), Joyce Salter, Nancy Sellers, Bailey Vinson (Liz Bauer’s great-granddaughter), Nancy Dustman (Joyce Salter’s sister).

In Current Need of Prayers: Kristopher Yoder, Lisa Kane, Vickie West, Sandy Klinger, Peg Malloy, Daniel Hopwood (Tom Hopwood’s son), John Renick, Joanne Moyer, Sheran Shenk (friend of Bruce & Peggy Schmidt), Angelina (Mascaro) Trotter, Alice Ciarrocca (friend of Karen Heacock & Phyllis McKeefrey), Anita Spisak (Ken Seiler’s mom), Christopher Humlhanz (Jaime Snyder’s cousin), Betty Poling (June Detweiler’s sister), Regi Gambino (friend of Lynn Plawa-Oxenford), Annette Beyer (friend of the Reillys), Joan Fonseca (B. Schmidt’s cousin), Bob Rocheleau (Bruce Schmidt’s brother-in-law), Atticus Jones (Lynn & Mike Plawa-Oxenford’s nephew), Connie Plawa (Lynn’s sister-in-law), Priscilla (Shaffer) Hollerbach, Milford Lyndaker (friend of Karen Seiler), Chelsea Mascaro (Hazel & Jerry’s granddaughter), Cheryl Nicholas (Tom Salter’s niece), Kathryn Shelly (Will Shaffer’s mother-in-law), Tony Miller (Pastor Raabe’s cousin), Lisa Ronan (MacDonald’s neighbor), the Horowitz Family (good friends of Mary Jane Moyer), Ed Muntz, Bridget Hopkins (friend of Don Capanear), Dawn Kownacki (friend of Harold Schaefer), Tom Widlund.



For all who grieve, including the family & friends of: Dan Black (Laymen Playmen), Roger Smith (friend of the Shaffer family), Buzz Benson (Karen Seiler’s uncle), Al Riley (Bruce Schmidt’s cousin), Goodloe Sutler (friend of Peggy Schmidt), Jan Madigan (Sue Wieland’s niece), Sally Muntz, Gerry Mason (Richard Badman’s son), Ann Marie Heidgerd, Pat Ferkitich (friend of Nancy Sellers).

For those in active duty military service: Jessica Murphy, Air Force; Matthew Smyrl, PA Army National Guard; Cole Dempsey, Air Force (Laura Kratz’s grandson), Eric Gutsche, Army (Janice Swartz’s grandson).

For active military deployed overseas: Kyle Murphy, Air Force; Nathaniel Smyrl, PA Army National Guard.

BOOKS FOR BABIES

April 6th to May 11th(Mothers’ Day)

SPONSORED BY WELCA AT GRACE

Hatfield Community Christian Coalition

Supporting Mitzvah Circle’s Diaper Bag Project (cont’d on p. 8)



Donate NEW and gently used hardback (cardboard) baby books to be added to **every baby diaper supply bag** sent to families in crisis with babies still in diapers.

There is only one (1) book for every 300 families under the poverty line in America. Please help us to help those in crisis. Questions: Contact Barb Watts at 215-362-6659

Status of the Call Process

Everyone wants to know what is coming next once Pastor Raabe retires. Me included. First and foremost, have patience. There is a process we must follow and for the most part we won't get started until June. We don't get to look for a new pastor while we still have one.

That said, we are starting to understand what might come next. Council met recently with Pastor Julie Dewerth who, as Dean of the Lower Montgomery Conference, represents the synod in much of this process. The normal process involves having a trained interim pastor appointed to guide us through the many steps. (Pr. Peterman and Pr. Nelson were the interims the last two times we did this.) There are not currently a lot of pastors available who are trained for this position. One possibility is that they will appoint a trained lay person to handle the transition process and a "Bridge Pastor" to cover pastoral duties. Because we did a congregational self-study 5-6 years ago, we may be able to shortcut that step and just update the report without a lot of congregational meetings. Even so, the process takes time, likely 18-24 months. That means we shouldn't expect to have a regularly called pastor again until sometime in 2027.

In other news, we have begun to have discussions with Faith Lutheran, in Montgomeryville, about ways we can work together. Thus far, we've only had one in-person meeting when Cathy Farrell and I met with Rich Hollenbach, Faith's council president. The next step is a joint meeting of the councils of both Grace and Faith together with Bishop Bryan Penman. We expect that he will discuss various ways our two congregations might work together and what those partnerships might look like. We've already held joint services with Faith and some Faith members volunteer at Thursday Soup Suppers. These are small first steps and where we go next is very open-ended.

I promise to keep the congregation updated through the *Parish News*. When we have something more concrete to discuss, we may hold informational congregational meetings. Meanwhile, know that we are doing all that we can to move this process forward in a timely manner.

Tom Salter, Council President

Mother's Day is Sunday, May 11th

Honoring and remembering our mothers is a Grace Church tradition. **Pink** Carnations honor our mothers and **White** Carnations remember our mothers who are no longer with us.

The funds from the sale of the carnations are used to support **Laurel House**, a local women's shelter for those who are victims of domestic violence. Laurel House is a Montgomery County organization that works to end domestic violence and provides housing and education for the victims of domestic violence. Our gifts to this agency will help the women and their families in our area. See the display in the narthex for order forms or use the form in this newsletter.

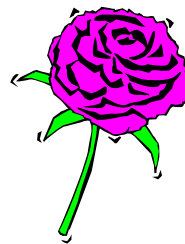
Orders are due by Sunday, May 4th

An order form is included in this newsletter. Please put your order in an envelope marked Mother's Day Carnations. Place it in the offering plate or the basket in the narthex. Orders may also be mailed to the church office or placed in the mailbox outside the main entrance to Grace.

Mother's Day Carnations

Single Stem Carnation \$2.50

Orders due by May 4th



Please place orders in the offering plate or display basket in the Narthex, mailed to Grace Church or placed in the mailbox outside the main entrance of Grace.

YOUR NAME _____

White Carnations

(in memory of): Number ordered _____ x \$2.50 = _____

Pink Carnations

(in honor of): Number ordered _____ x \$2.50 = _____

TOTAL= \$ _____

___ cash ___ check

*Checks should be made out to Grace Lutheran Church – **memo carnations***

Flowers may be taken home after either service on May 11th

PLEASE FILL IN:

In **memory** of: _____

FROM: _____

In **honor** of: _____

FROM: _____

Proceeds will benefit the mothers and children of Laurel House

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Jessica Moran, Director

- April 2nd Lenten Community Service at Grace
April 9th Lenten Community Service
April 12th Annual Grace Easter Egg Hunt
April 13th Palm Sunday Worship, 8 & 10:30
April 17th Maundy Thursday Worship, 7:30
April 18th Office and Stepping Stones CLOSED for Good Friday
Good Friday Worship, 12 & 7:30
April 20th EASTER SUNDAY WORSHIP, 8 & 10:30 with
Easter Breakfast in between services



View our website by scanning this code



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