

# *Grace* MESSENGER



Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

MARCH



## Pastor's Reflection

Tom Brodbeck

This morning was a beautiful spring-like day. The temperatures were cold, but the sun was shining brightly. By noon, though, the sun had disappeared. The sky was grey. The breeze picked up. The forecasters say we might have an inch or more of snow before tomorrow morning. How quickly things have changed!

I've been thinking a lot about those quick changes lately. We all know people whose worlds were literally upended following a trip over a toy on the floor or a simple medical procedure that went awry or a phone call from an employer, and more. We can broaden it to other situations as well. For example, in our community, two neighboring congregations will now celebrate Lent and Easter minus a pastor who surprised them with an unanticipated resignation. The joy of anticipation is covered by a cloud. In one moment, the sun is shining; in the next the clouds roll in.

That is a good visual image for me as I work on my sermons for Lent. In my study of the texts, I see the growing clouds in the hearts of those disciples – and even on Jesus Himself. Gradually as Jesus and His followers move closer and closer to the cross the mood in the text gets gloomier and gloomier.

Yet in the midst of it all, the plan of God is being fulfilled. How do I communicate that truth in those sermons? How can I help my hearers to know that the SON still shines even when the SUN doesn't?

Let me encourage you this day to look for the SON shine even when there is little sunshine. The story doesn't end at the cross. There is an empty tomb to follow.

# March Outreach Corner



ONE PLUS GOD

**Save the date:** Sunday April 7<sup>th</sup>, Wynand “Wayne” de Wet from One Plus God Ministries will be coming to speak to us for a Breakfast Break during the Sunday school hour. One Plus God Ministries is an interdenominational, global organization that shares the Gospel in word and action, supports missionaries and provides people with opportunities for growth through serving. They are currently working with Grace Lutheran Church in Jackson Center for a mission trip this May 30-June 11, 2024. Come and hear more about their work, mission trip opportunities, and how we can support what they are doing.



## **Shoes that Grow**

Malawi Orphan Care Project, Inc. has announced a fundraising project to provide shoes for our orphans in Malawi. They are designed to last for years and will provide protection from hazards and infections that are present with bare feet.

The Shoe That Grows has 5 times the impact of an ordinary shoe because it expands five sizes and lasts for years. This adjustable shoe is easy to clean and easy to use, has a compressed rubber sole, antibacterial synthetic upper, high-grade Velcro straps, and no mechanical parts or gears to break. The shoes are available in five sizes.

Without shoes, children are especially vulnerable to diseases and parasites that can cause illness and even death. Children who get sick miss school, can't help their families, and suffer needlessly. And since children's feet grow so quickly, they often outgrow donated shoes within a year, leaving them once again exposed to illness and disease.

## **The Shoe That Grows can change that**

The shoes are manufactured in Kenya, and we hope to have the shipment arrive so that our July mission team can help with the distribution. Each pair of shoes costs \$20.

**Please consider donating to this project, by a donation to your church with the memo marked “Shoes”, or on the Grace App or website by choosing the Malawi Shoe Campaign.**





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## “Stephen Ministers: The After People

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Stephen Ministers come into a person's life immediately after a crisis has hit and then provide care for as long after as needed. Could you benefit from the listening ear of a trusted friend and Stephen Minister? Please email Pastor Tom Brodbeck to learn more: [tom.brodbeck@grace-nalc.org](mailto:tom.brodbeck@grace-nalc.org)

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## Soccer Shots Spring Registration Now Open

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**Soccer Shots®**  
The Children's Soccer Experience

# spring soccer

Season starts March 18th  
10 weeks  
Ages 2-5  
\$120

Location: Grace Lutheran Church  
Classes on: Monday & Thursday Evenings

A QR code is located in the bottom right corner of the poster, which is a white square with a black border and a black and white pixelated pattern.

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## Young At Heart

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What A Busy month together! Young At Heart (Ages 55 and up\_ enjoyed the music of the jazz band trio at the Methodist Church. They had us dancing in the pews! Who knew you could do that. We also took time out of life to enjoy each other at the Fat Tuesday Breakfast. We sported necessary mask and beads. The future holds A youth Arts Ambassadors musical on march 10<sup>th</sup>. Also another, La Comedia show "West Side Story" on April 5th and possibly a solar eclipse cookout April 8<sup>th</sup>. So get out and join the fun.

Roger Bentz



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## Choral Concert at Grace

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Madison County Choral Singers will present their 2024 winter concert at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church on Saturday, March 16 at 7:00 pm. The MCS is a select chorale of 50 singers from central Ohio under the direction of Ken Miller. The program will consist of pieces drawn from sacred choral literature with some uplifting traditional and folk compositions included. While it is not directly a worship service, many of the songs are worshipful. A freewill offering will be received. One of our Grace members is part of this group. We hope that you can join us for a lovely evening of inspiring choral music!

Bev Kaech

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## Lenten Worship in March

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By the time you read this article we will be about one-third of the way through the Lenten season. With Easter (March 31) closing out the month, these next several weeks are fully focused on our journey with Jesus along “The Way.”

In addition to our regular schedule of Sunday morning worship (at 8 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.), our Thursday midweek worship continues through March 21. Those services start at 7 p.m. and will contain a couple of different worship components. As a part of the Sacrament of Holy Communion, we will offer a time of anointing. The worship will also include the intoning of a psalm – something that is a part of our Lutheran heritage but not a regular worship practice.

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday on March 24. Warm up your arms so you are prepared to wave your palm branch to start that service. You might want to Google how to fold that branch into a lovely cross too.

On Maundy Thursday and on Good Friday we will worship at noon and 7 p.m. The Good Friday services will be identical. The evening Maundy Thursday service will include the Rite of First Communion for several of our young people. A reception to celebrate them will follow that service.

And remember to memorize our theme verse: “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). It’s one every Christian should know by heart.





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## Adult Sunday School in March

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Starting February 28, Pastor Tom will facilitate a four-week course titled “Pillars of Lent.” Based on teaching from the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew, participants will focus on three spiritual disciplines that are central to the theme of this season: Prayer, Fasting and Giving. (You might remember those were the central themes of the Gospel reading on Ash Wednesday.)

We will begin with a two week look at fasting before spending one session each on prayer and almsgiving. The goal of the course will be more than informational. We hope to learn how these disciplines enhance our Lenten experience and serve as a foundation piece of our spiritual growth.

There will not be an Adult Sunday School class on either of the last two Sundays of the month. March 24 (Palm Sunday) is the spring congregational meeting and March 31 is Easter Sunday.



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## Our Annual Easter Egg Hunt

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## First Communion

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1801 St. Paris Pike  
Springfield, OH 45504  
[www.grace-nalc.org](http://www.grace-nalc.org) 937.399.6257



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