



Vol. 55 March 2024

VOICE  
OF  
GRACE

# March Forward

Our 80 years of ministry - **Thank You, Lord!** – and keep leading us *forward!*

Our God is so good. He leads us forward in grace, even blessing us with more grace on top of previous grace. This is what the apostle John writes about when he remembers God's grace in the past and is so moved by God's present grace in the sending of His Son to be our Savior. John 1:16 *"Out of His fullness, we have all received grace in place of grace already given."*

Think about your blessings in life. Yes, you've had some hard times, and somehow - by grace! - God has brought you to this day. He's given you grace and then He's given you even more grace. You had great blessings before, and then you received even more blessings. Thank You, Lord!

It's in this grace-filled confidence that we march forward as the people of Grace Lutheran Church and School in Winter Haven, Florida, in the year of our Lord 2024. *"We have received grace in place of grace already given,"* AND we believe God has much more grace for us in the days ahead. We thank God for our past blessings. What a grand birthday we are getting to celebrate. As for the present, in many ways we are doing really well (Read the rest of this newsletter!) AND we have great plans of blessing for the future. *"By our centennial celebration (2043) we will cultivate a new generation of deep-rooted disciples who will offer a Gospel-centered ministry to our community for the next 100 years."*

Even with our enthusiasm for the future, we recognize the current landscape of Christianity in our country. It's not good. Churches in America continue to decline even as populations of people swell. Yes, some congregations in our country are doing well – but not as a whole. Lord, help us. Lead us to repent of those sins that get in the way of Your will and lead us to follow You in whatever paths You have before us, even if those paths involve "the carrying of a cross."

Yes, there are great challenges before us. We will adapt to the people God places among us just as the Christian Church has done in the centuries before us. As we adopt new approaches for new generations, we will remain rooted in that which never changes: God's grace for us in Jesus Christ. We abide in God's Word; and we hold fast to Christ's timeless teachings, believing that our God will continue to keep giving us grace upon grace.

Think about how this truth of grace upon grace relates to your life this week! Thank the Lord, and march forward – with confidence in Him!

Pastor Charles Reich



Did you know that Grace Lutheran Church is officially 80 years old?! That means:

- 80 years of the Gospel impacting our community.
- 80 years of faith strengthened by God's Word and Sacraments.
- 80 years of comfort for the mourning.
- 80 years of help for the hopeless.
- 80 years of forgiveness for sinners.
- 80 years of celebrating with the joyful.
- 80 years of lives changed by the Holy Spirit.
- 80 years of connecting people to Jesus.

**80 years to celebrate!**

**We want to celebrate with you! Join us**

**Sunday, March 3**

**One service at 10 AM**

**Celebration begins after Worship**

We'll celebrate all that God has done through Grace these 80 years, and we'll dream about all that God will continue to do through the next 80 years to come. Come celebrate God's Grace through Grace! Special inter-generational activities in the gym, photo booth, lunch in Trinity Hall, bouncy houses on the playground and wonderful photo displays and videos of our 80 years at Grace! You won't want to miss this great day of celebration! Wear your Rooted shirt!



# Rooted Campaign Accomplishments



## A list of what YOU have helped us accomplish February 2023 – February 2024

- ♦ 168 commitments representing a 50% increase in annual commitments made
- ♦ Purchased existing building, 330 Ave. C, SE, instead of incurring rising construction costs of building a new building to house 10 classrooms.
- ♦ Construction of underground retention ponds with storm check chambers under pavement.
- ♦ Construction of new parking lot
- ♦ Repaving and striping of existing school parking lot
- ♦ New sidewalk surrounding parking lot
- ♦ Side entry pavers to the sanctuary
- ♦ Pre-school playground relocated with new equipment
- ♦ New landscaping on 4<sup>th</sup> street and Ave. C in front of sanctuary
- ♦ Replacement of all plumbing supply lines and irrigation piping on Ave. C side of school
- ♦ Development of a 40-Day Devotional Booklet with devotions written by members, staff and faculty of Grace.
- ♦ 10,000 "Cross in My Pocket" crosses given by members to those in our community and beyond
- ♦ Secured campus with electronic locking doors
- ♦ Generosity increase of 50% (in giving) compared to previous years

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*Grace Lutheran Church*  
*Worship Schedule for Lent and Easter 2024*

*Wednesday Evenings of Lent - 7:00 PM*  
(Lenten Dinner is served beginning at 5:30 each Wednesday.)

*March 6*

*March 13*

*March 20*

*Holy Week*

*March 24 - Palm Sunday*

*8:30 AM - Worship Service \**

*10:45 AM - Worship Service - Confirmation*

*March 28 - Maundy Thursday - 7:00 PM \**

*March 29 - Good Friday*

*12:00 Noon - Worship Service*

*7:00 PM Tenebrae - Service of Darkness*

*March 30 - Easter Vigil - 7:00 PM*

*March 31 - Easter - The Resurrection of Our Lord*

*6:30 AM - Easter Sunrise - Outside*

*8:30 AM - Contemporary Easter Worship\**

*10:45 AM - Easter Festival Worship\**

*\* Services with Holy Communion*



# WELCOME

## New Members

New members will be presented before the church at the 10:00 AM service on **March 3**. There will only be one service that day with Grace's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration following. It will be the perfect time to introduce yourself and get to know the new members better!

### **Mid-Week Worship During Lent** ***"Guided to the Cross"***

**Wednesday Evening Worship with Circuit Pastors Preaching**

*Throughout the holy season of Lent, we are drawn to Calvary to live in forgiveness, hope, love, peace, trust and perseverance. Each week, the services in this series reveal how Christ and His cross serve as examples for us of how to live our lives for and through our crucified Lord and Savior.*

Join us in Trinity Hall at 5:30 PM and join your brothers and sisters for a great meal and fellowship.

**March 6 - "Guided to Trust"** - Pastor Chris Hazzard, Christ, Lakeland  
Papa John's Pizza with dessert

**March 13 - "Guided to Peace"** - Pastor Bill Whitehead, Lake Wales  
Meatball subs, salad, chips & dessert

**March 20 - "Guided to Love"** - Vicar Mark Esser, Grace  
Hot dogs, coleslaw, chips & ice cream

*Christ is Risen, Alleluia!*

SATURDAY, APRIL 8TH  
9:30AM-11:30AM  
GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH  
WINTER HAVEN

# EASTER EGG HUNT

EGG HUNT, CANDY,  
ART ZONE, GAMES,  
FREE LUNCH AND  
SNOWCONES!



**CANDY  
DONATIONS  
NEEDED!**

**DROP OFF AT CHURCH OFFICE**







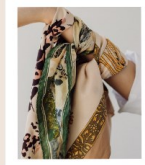
A big, big thank you to all who supported our Bake Sale. Your help continues to allow our support of various mission projects and two seminary students. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

We are excited to again have our **“gently used” purse, jewelry, and accessories sale** which will take place on Saturday, April 6, 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM; and following the church services on **Saturday and Sunday, April 6 and 7**. We will accept donations of purses, accessories, and jewelry (all in very good condition - **no clothing please**) beginning March 23 thru April 4. Donations may be left in the Mary-Martha Room. Please note: Any items **not sold will be donated, not returned**. We look forward to having many participants in this event.

## ACCESSORIES SALE - TRINITY HALL

April 6 - 9 AM - 1 PM & After Worship Service

April 7 - After Worship Services



Please bring donations for sale to Mary-Martha Room, March 23 - April 4.  
All proceeds help support our ongoing mission projects.

Always available for sale in Trinity Hall (on countertop) are lovely note cards for various occasions. There are 8 cards in each pack at a cost of \$5.

We thank and applaud our quilting group for the beautiful quilts once again displayed in our recent services. This year they provided 148 quilts, 37 baby care kits, and 87 personal hygiene kits. The hygiene kits were put together by our school's 5th grade students. We greatly appreciate their being involved with us in this project.

Ladies, if you are not already involved in our ministry, please consider joining us at Martha Circle, 2nd Thursday of each month, or volunteering to help in any way you can.



# Grace Lutheran Church Sunshine Club News



March 7—Grace Lutheran School 4th Grade Signers and Singers  
AND “CHRIST UNLIMITED MUSICAL GROUP”



Join us in Trinity Hall as our fantastic 4th grade students entertain us with their voices and hands. Following their performance, we will also hear “Christ Unlimited.” Gathering time 11-11:30 AM, lunch at noon and program at 12:30. Bring a pot luck dish to share. Come and show your support for these great children and enjoy this fellowship time. Dessert provided.



*Looking ahead to April – Dot Reiser, one of our favorite musical guests, will join us on Thursday, April 4. Save the date!*

One of the most active groups (1961-present) in our church community, Sunshine club focuses on individuals and couples, providing social interaction, support and spiritual growth. Join us the first Thursday of the month for food and fellowship. Everyone is welcome.



## ADULT GAME DAY

TRINITY HALL 1-3 PM

JOIN US ON THE 4TH THURSDAY OF THE MONTH FOR  
GAMES, FELLOWSHIP, FUN & SNACKS



### SPRING FORWARD March 10

→  
DAYLIGHT  
SAVING  
TIME BEGINS!

[+1 HOUR]



### Parish Statistics

#### Death

Spencer Holden 2/20/2024  
Samantha Holden 2/20/2024  
Dale Arturi 2/13/2024  
Theresa “Tee” Chorney 2/12/2024



## Treasurer's Report for Six Months Ending December 31, 2023

	Current Month Actual	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance
<b><u>Church</u></b>				
Income	\$ 218,179.36	\$ 901,161.18	\$ 905,950.02	\$ (4,788.84)
Expenses	\$ 139,935.94	\$ 682,364.51	\$ 702,724.51	\$ (20,360.00)
Total Church	<b>\$ 78,243.42</b>	<b>\$ 218,796.67</b>	<b>\$ 203,225.51</b>	<b>\$ 15,571.16</b>

<b><u>School</u></b>				
Income	\$ 68,932.13	\$ 1,783,239.63	\$ 1,790,595.82	\$ (7,356.19)
Expenses	\$ 226,184.63	\$ 1,684,368.68	\$ 1,741,968.76	\$ (57,600.08)
Net	\$ (157,252.50)	\$ 98,870.95	\$ 48,627.06	\$ 50,243.89
Designated (In/Out Accounts)	\$ 1,666.03	\$ (7,497.06)		
Total School	<b>\$ (158,918.53)</b>	<b>\$ 106,368.01</b>		

<b><u>Investment Assets</u></b>	
Church Investments - Restricted	\$ 991,558.55
Church Endowment Fund	\$ 1,411,033.91
School Endowment Fund	\$ 1,131,084.20
Bernthal Endowment Scholarship Fund	\$ 145,531.01
All Other Scholarships/Investments	\$ 23,605.30

## Grace Lutheran Church Attendance Trending Through 12/31/23

Average through Dec. 31				
	2018	2021	2022	2023
	524	330	383	428
		-37%	16%	12%
	0.370229	0.160606	0.117493	0.183206

18% down from 2018 baseline  
% Growth from prior year

Average by Service thru December 31					
	2018	2020	2021	2022	2023
Saturday	96	40	64	65	70
8:30	158	77	101	110	132
10:45	230	119	150	177	186

\*\*Difference between Totals and Average/Service is due to Special services, e.g., Holy Week, Christmas, etc.

%Growth by Service From Prior Period					
	2018	2020	2021	2022	2023
Saturday		-56%		1.6%	7.7%
8:30		-51%		8.9%	20.0%
10:45		-48%		18.0%	5.1%

# Grace Lutheran School Pre-School 2's-8th Grade News

Phone: 863-293-9744

SCHOOL WEBSITE: [school.glwh.org](http://school.glwh.org)



## Music

In preparation for their appearance at the Lutheran Music Festival, the Grace Lutheran Fourth Grade Choir performed the song "Holy Forever" by Chris Tomlin with American sign language at a recent chapel service.



Additionally, the choir is preparing a song in Swahili based on the beloved hymn "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." Please pray for our students as they share the gospel through song at the Lutheran Music Festival on February 23.



5th grade continues to practice their music literacy with the ukulele. Students demonstrate their competency in reading and playing by "auditioning" with

different songs focusing on specific techniques designed to grow their skill on the instrument.

Stay tuned for more information about supporting Grace Lutheran School and our music ensembles at Community Fest in Winter Haven on Saturday, March 2.

## Early Childhood

Our preschool students were so excited about the month of February! On the 14th, we got to attend "big" chapel for Ash Wednesday and then got to celebrate our special friendships at our class Valentine's Party. It was also so great to have our Grandparents join us on Grandparents' Day. Thank



you to the Grandparents' Day committee, Volunteers, and Grandparents who helped make this such a special day for our preschoolers.

## Computers

In media news, a huge thank you to everyone that volunteered and supported the Book Fair! We are so thankful for everyone working together to make it a success! We are thrilled to begin to make some new purchases for our library.

## Artists of the month

Will - 1st grade  
Sadie - 3rd Grade  
Cullen - 8th grade



## SCHOOL CALENDAR

### March

2: Community Fest - Downtown Winter Haven  
8: End of 3rd Quarter  
Early Release Day  
N.U.T. Day  
11 - 15: No School - Spring Break  
18: School Resumes  
Beginning of 4th Quarter  
20: Uniform Sales 7:30AM - 4:00PM  
21: \$2 N.U.T. Day  
27: Youth Group 6:00 - 8:00PM  
29: Good Friday  
Early Release Day

### April

1: Easter Monday - No School  
4: Spring Pictures  
5: CFLAA Track Meet  
10: Family STREAM Day 3:00 - 4:00PM  
Youth Group 6:00 - 8:00PM  
12: Early Release Day  
N.U.T. Day  
17: P.A.C.E. Coffee Talk 8:30AM  
18: \$2 N.U.T. Day  
19: Midterm of 4th Quarter  
Spring Theatre Production: 101 Dalmatians 6:30PM  
20: Spring Theatre Production: 101 Dalmatians 2:00PM  
22 - 26: MAP Testing (Grades 4 - 8)  
24: Youth Group 6:00 - 8:00PM  
29 - May 3: MAP Testing (Grades K - 3)

**THE MISSION STATEMENT OF GLS:** The mission of Grace Lutheran School is to provide its students and their families with a strong spiritual and academic foundation so that they know and understand God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ and are also able to live lives appropriate to their positions in their families, churches, community, and country.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					<b>1</b> 10 AM Bible Study w/ Pastor Meyer	<b>2</b> 10 AM Confirmation Banner Making  <b>5 PM Worship Svc</b>
<b>3</b> <b>3rd Sunday in Lent</b>  <b>10 AM Worship</b> <b>11 AM Grace 80th Birthday Party</b>	<b>4</b> 7:30 AM Staff Devos  7 PM Elder Meeting	<b>5</b> 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff  12 PM God's Guys  <b>5:30 PM Prayer Svc</b> 5:30 PM Small Group 6 PM AHG/TL 7 PM Praise Rehearsal	<b>6</b> 1 PM WM Board Mtg.  5:30 PM Lenten Dinner 6 PM Confirmation 7 PM Mid-Week Lenten Worship	<b>7</b> 9:30 AM LWR Quilters 11 AM Sunshine Club  3:15 PM Grace Choristers  6 PM Trinity Bells 7:15 PM Grace Chorale	<b>8</b> 10 AM Bible Study w/ Pastor Meyer  6 PM Trail Life Mother/ Son Even	<b>9</b>      <b>5 PM Worship Svc</b> 6 PM American Heritage Girls Father/Daughter Dance
<b>10</b> <b>4th Sunday in Lent</b> <b>8:30 AM Worship</b> 9:45 AM Bible Study & Sunday School 9:45 AM Sunday School <b>10:45 AM Worship</b> 12 PM Families in the Park	<b>11</b> <b>Spring Break</b> <b>No School</b>	<b>12</b> <b>Spring Break</b> <b>No School</b>  10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff  <b>5:30 PM Prayer Svc</b> 5:30 PM Small Group 7 PM Praise Rehearsal	<b>13</b> <b>Spring Break</b> <b>No School</b>  5:30 PM Lenten Dinner 5:30 PM Youth Group 7 PM Mid-Week Lenten Worship	<b>14</b> <b>Spring Break</b> <b>No School</b>  9:30 AM LWR Quilters 1 PM Martha Circle  6 PM Trinity Bells 7:15 PM Grace Chorale	<b>15</b> <b>Spring Break</b> <b>No School</b>  10 AM Bible Study w/ Pastor Meyer  5 PM TLC Training	<b>16</b>      <b>5 PM Worship Svc</b>
<b>17</b> <b>5th Sunday in Lent</b> <b>8:30 AM Worship</b> 9:45 AM Bible Study & Sunday School <b>10:45 AM Worship</b>	<b>18</b> 7:30 AM Staff Devos  6 PM School Board	<b>19</b> 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff 12 PM God's Guys  <b>5:30 PM Prayer Svc</b> 5:30 PM Small Group 6 PM AHG/TL 7 PM Praise Rehearsal	<b>20</b> 5:30 PM Lenten Dinner 5:30 PM Confirmation 7 PM Mid-Week Lenten Worship	<b>21</b> 9:30 AM LWR Quilters  1 PM Adult Game Day 3:15 PM Grace Choristers  6 PM Trinity Bells 7:15 PM Grace Chorale	<b>22</b> 10 AM Bible Study w/ Pastor Meyer	<b>23</b>      <b>5 PM Worship Svc</b>
<b>24</b> <b>PALM SUNDAY</b> <b>8:30 AM Worship</b> 9:45 AM Bible Study & Sunday School <b>10:45 AM Worship</b> <b>Rite of Confirmation</b>	<b>25</b> 7:30 AM Staff Devos  5:30 PM Business Management 6:30 BOD Meeting	<b>26</b> 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff  <b>5:30 PM Prayer Svc</b> 5:30 PM Small Group 6 PM Exec. Elders 7 PM Praise Rehearsal	<b>27</b>    6 PM Youth Group	<b>28</b> <b>Maundy Thursday</b> 9:30 AM LWR Quilters  1 PM Adult Game Day 3:15 PM Grace Choristers  <b>7 PM Maundy Thursday Worship</b>	<b>29</b> <b>Good Friday</b> <b>12 PM Good Friday Worship</b>  <b>7 PM Good Friday Worship</b>	<b>30</b> 9:30 Easter Egg Hunt    <b>7 PM Easter Vigil Worship</b>
<b>31</b> <b>EASTER SUNDAY</b> <b>6:30 AM Sunrise Worship - outside</b> <b>7 - 10:30 AM Easter Breakfast</b> <b>8:30 AM Worship</b> <b>10:45 AM Worship</b>						





**VOICE OF GRACE**

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CONNECTING PEOPLE TO JESUS