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## TRANSITION AND CHANGE AHEAD

By Pastor Chris Becker



In Ecclesiastes chapter 3 the writer speaks about change. “To every season...” the writer speaks, there is change. “A time to be born and a time to die, a time to cry and a time to laugh.” Simply said, transition or change is inevitable. Now, that said, we also realize that change is difficult. My dad said to me when I invited him to a White Sox/ Twins game (he was an avid Sox fan) that he would rather not. He said that he was beginning to feel safer staying in a place that was familiar to him. Change is hard so it is no wonder we resist it.

As I get ready to travel to Tanzania again, I anticipate that those who take this journey, me included, will change from the experience we will encounter. Our lives will be different. Transitions happen as we engage in the life of this world as we move from one way of thinking to another, one way of acting to another.

John the Baptizer said as Jesus came out of the wilderness, “I must decrease, he must increase.” He was speaking about his role in relationship to Jesus. He recognized a transition was happening as Jesus took a more prominent role in bringing God’s message to the world. It did not mean that John quit, rather, John’s role changed.

Transitions happen when something new takes place, something different happens. When we age or go through the various stages of life we recognize that our bodies and minds think and act differently. We grow through our experiences and they mold us into something new. Transitions

can be from child to teenager to adult. They can be from one role in life to another. Transitions can happen as we enter into new relationships or take on new forms of responsibility.

Jesus said to his disciples, as he was planning to leave them, that he would send a Counselor (John 14: 15-31). The disciples were scared, insecure, not sure of what would happen next, so they needed to know that God remained with them. When we go through transitions in life we too are at times confused, unsure, or insecure.

Amazing Grace Lutheran Church is no stranger to transitions. Each time we wondered what was going to happen next, but each time God provided the resources to walk alongside us and to guide us into the next adventure. Ultimately that is what we hold on to – “I will be with you always.” When everything else is changing, when we are surrounded by all sorts of transitions, there comes this never changing promise – I will be with you always!

We are experiencing the transition of one youth and young adult coordinator to another. We are examining utilizing people in different roles in order to strengthen the work of this congregation. We are looking at different ways to provide care and leadership as we recognize the huge amount of homes being built right around us. We are taking a

closer look at how we can transition in a powerful way to meet the needs of those who are in our community. All of this can be overwhelming, but it can also be exciting as we see this as a new opportunity to be the church of Jesus Christ in the world.

Almost ten years ago no one ever thought that we would be the church we are today— two suburban congregations coming together as one, yet God walked with us during this transition. We have had faith filled, dedicated members leave over the years, yet God brought new faces with new gifts to this community. We lost our music leaders and wondered what we would do next, but God brought us a gifted music lead-

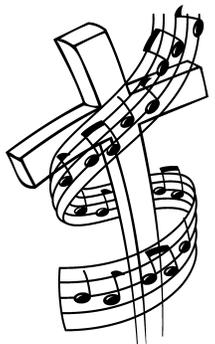
er and our singing became bolder.

We face some unsettling tasks, but we do not face them alone. God has placed us together with all sorts of talents and experiences for this very moment. We have history, and we have commitment to join God at work in the world!

Pray that the transitions we are about to experience will draw us closer to the one who promises to be with us and allows us to give witness to the world that God is present in their lives as well.



## Worship and Music Ministry Notes



By Louise Lentz  
Worship and Music Chair

As the summer advances and continues to unfold, we pause to look around at the beautiful flowers, lush lawns, prolific vegetable gardens and thank God for his amazing world. The paraments on the Altar remain green. Green symbolizes our growth in faith as we follow the teachings and ministry of Christ. Summer

is the season of growth in nature, in our back yards and gardens, as well as in our faith.

### New Children's Choir

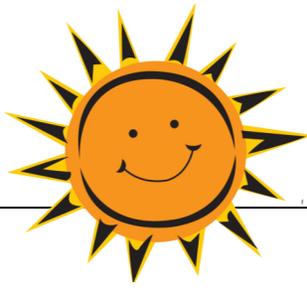
The main topic for discussion at our July meeting was the children's choirs. Susan Young has decided to step down from the role of His Harmony Director. We thank Susan for her leadership of the choir this past year. She stepped in, did a fabulous job with the choir and delighted our congregation with a musical in May. Our discussion focused on starting a "new chapter" for our children's choirs with an exciting proposal to combine His Harmony with King's Kids to form a new choir for children ages 4 to 7<sup>th</sup> grade. This new choir would build relationships among the children – between ages and with each other as well as build relationships with parents – between ages and with each other to develop a stronger sense of community. With a larger choir, more voices would create greater energy and the choir could sing in worship even when some children are gone. This may allow us to have choir music each Sunday in one of the worship services, including the 8 am service. It also provides more possibilities for creativity using instruments and different musical approaches. Some of the more practical benefits include using one director and one accompanist instead of two and better coordination between Sanctuary and children's choirs singing in services.

Of course, we also discussed concerns such as the wide age span and we may substitute a concert for the musical in May. It is not "the way we have always done it," but the Worship & Music Team feels it is a fresh new approach which will make the best use of our resources and maintain the vitality of our children's choirs. Your feedback on this idea is welcome.

### Have you heard about the Free Outdoor Concert Featuring Rachel Kurtz?

As you may know, on Sunday, August 28, Rachel Kurtz, a nationally known singer and song writer, will be at Amazing Grace for the 9:30 worship service and for a late afternoon outdoor concert. We invited our neighboring community by knocking on doors and extending a written "door hanger" invitation. Area churches and all residents of Inver Grove Heights have been invited online. Mark the date on your calendar and invite friends, family and neighbors. **Help with the event is needed. We need help setting up, welcoming our guests, directing parking, and cleaning up.** Contact me (Louise Lentz), Sue Grundhoffer, or any of the Worship & Music or Stewardship & Evangelism team members to let us know where you would like to help.

As always, we welcome your feedback to help us plan worship experiences that are meaningful, relevant, Spirit-filled, and grounded in God's word. Connect with any of the members on the team: Louise Lentz, chair; Pastor Chris Becker, advisory; Trish Ebensteiner, Pastor Chris Kinney, Laurel Oseth, Brad Pipal, Nancy Pollock, Gloria Rasmussen, Angy Thelemann, Judy & Tom Thompson, and Susan Young.



## August Worship

Sunday	Theme	Lessons	Worship Services
<b>August 7</b> <i>Pentecost 11</i>	Vulnerability in Love	To be Determined	8:00 am Abbreviated Worship with Holy Communion 9:30 am Worship with Holy Communion
<b>August 14</b> <i>Pentecost 12</i> <i>Sending of Africa Mission Trippers</i>	Vulnerability in Courage	To be Determined	8:00 am Abbreviated Worship with Holy Communion 9:30 am Worship with Holy Communion
<b>August 21</b> <i>Pentecost 13</i>	Vulnerability in Empathy	To be Determined	8:00 am Abbreviated Worship with Holy Communion 9:30 am Worship with Holy Communion
<b>August 28</b> <i>Pentecost 14</i>	Guest Musician Rachel Kurtz	To be Determined	8:00 am Abbreviated Worship with Holy Communion 9:30 am Worship with Holy Communion



## LOVE TO SING? WANT TO PARTY?



Our annual **Sanctuary Choir picnic** is scheduled for Saturday August 13<sup>th</sup> at the home of Jeanne Zimmer and Pete Steinke. We will gather at 4 p.m. (Contact Church Office for address.)

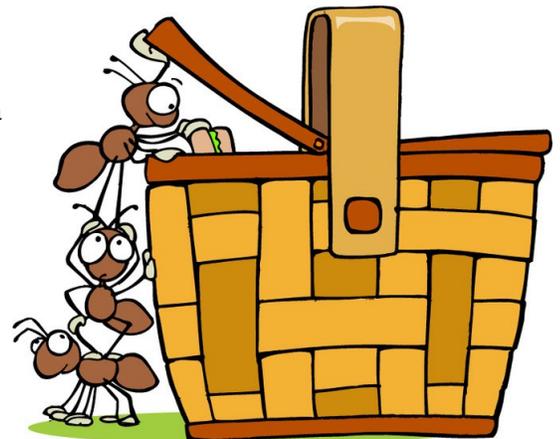
We will provide hamburgers, hot dogs and brats, as well as beverages. **We ask that you bring a dish to share.**

Spouses, significant others, and children are all welcome.  
**New members are especially welcome!**

Please RSVP by email, phone call or in person at church (I will have a sign-up sheet with me). **In your reply, please let me know the number of people coming with you.**

I am looking forward to a great party, and a wonderful year of making music together!

Blessings, Susan Young, Director





An exciting opportunity is before us as we begin a new children's choir this fall. (See details in the Worship and Music Ministry Team article on page 2 of this newsletter.) This choir will be for children ages 4 years old through 7th grade. We will meet on Wednesday evenings from 6:30—7:30 pm. Our start date is yet to be determined. All children in this age group will receive a letter with details in mid August. If you have any questions please contact Angy Thelemann or Louise Lentz.

## ATTENTION ALL SINGERS!!!!

Submitted by Susan Young, Sanctuary Choir Director

Have you received the gift of music through singing? Do you have a desire to be a part of the music ministry of Amazing Grace? Then come, join the Sanctuary Choir! You need not be professionally trained to sing in the choir. We need people who love the Lord, want to praise Him in song, and are committed to that endeavor. Anyone from 8<sup>th</sup> grade and older is welcome. We rehearse on Wednesdays from 7:40 p.m. to 9:10 p.m. from September through May. We sing during worship twice a month, and for special services at Christmas, Lent and Easter. Our first rehearsal is Wednesday August 31st at 7:40 p.m. Contact Susan Young.

**Want to meet the choir in an informal setting first? Join us at our annual picnic on August 13th. See details on page 2 of this newsletter.**



## Christian Education Ministry

### Energy and Excitement for Christian Education Ministry Team

Submitted by Kent E. Rhein-Medina, Chair

Summer is, hopefully, a time when we can slow down and take some needed deep breathes. Several of the leaders of Christian ministry teams can do just that after overseeing the culmination of three big events within our congregation. It a good time to reflect on these accomplishments. Our Sunday School program completed another successful year. During the last few weeks of Sunday School classes, students made gifts for the teachers, a family fun day took place, and the Becker's hosted an appreciation dinner for volunteers and their families at their farm. All sorts of kindness was being spread during Vacation Bible School held June 20-23 (see the article in another part of the newsletter for a great review of the activities). In addition, by now we will have heard from our participants in the youth mission trip to Idaho and how this experience touched their lives and its impact on their relationships with one another, God, and the world around them. If you are not a "friend" of Amazing Grace on Facebook, then you missed out on some great photos of these events!

We were thrilled to learn that Linda Becker would continue on as the Sunday School Coordinator for the 2016-2017

school year. However, after that she has indicated her desire to step back from this role. It was important for the Christian Education Ministry Team and for our children and youth to have a smooth transition to a new Sunday School Coordinator. In light of this, a proposal was made to and approved by the Church Council to create a new, one year only position of Assistant Sunday School Coordinator in which this new hire would "learn the ropes" from Linda and then move into the Coordinator position in June 2017. (Again, you will find more information in a separate article in this newsletter about the position and hiring process.) Please thoughtfully consider if this might be something that God is calling you to do to make a powerful impact on the spiritual lives of the children and families of our congregation.

Finally, the growth of participation in all of our youth focused programming has caused a nice problem we are running out of chairs and tables for the lower level. Largely through several generous donations, we will be purchasing a dozen chairs and two tables to meet this need. At the cost of about \$450, we are thankful to those individuals who gave to this cause.

## Sunday School Volunteers Needed

Now is the time to step forward boldly and volunteer as a shepherd or teacher for Sunday School. With prayer and loving support, this is a commitment which will enrich your life as well as sharing the love of Christ with all of God's children. Here are the openings available:

- \* **Shepherd:** Grades K—2: 2 positions open
- \* **Shepherd:** Grades 3—4 2 positions open
- \* **Shepherd:** Grades 5—7: 1 position open

Thank you to Patty Johnson, Melissa Gleghorn, and Kami Burgess for volunteering to team teach preschool this year.

A shepherd is a loving Christian mentor who partners with a Sunday School class of children, leading them through the year. A shepherd shares the story of his or her faith journey, and listens to the stories, good times and bad, which the children talk about each week. Shepherds pray for and with the children. Shepherds assist a teacher with the weekly Sunday School activities. Shepherds work with another adult to schedule or alternate their week by week attendance from September to November and January to May. High school students, caring adults, and grandparents make wonderful shepherds.

Teachers are needed for the following rotations:

September 18, 15, Oct. 2: "Noah's Ark"  
Bible Skills and Games  
Cooking  
Arts and Crafts

October 9, 16, 23: "Daniel and the Lions"  
Computers and Video  
Bible Skills and Games  
Creative Dramatics

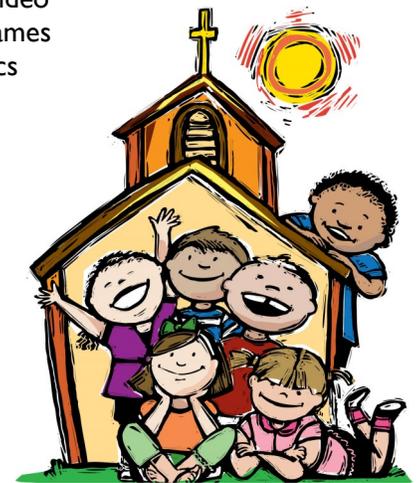
Curriculum is available on the website: [sundayschool.sparkhouseonline.org](http://sundayschool.sparkhouseonline.org)

Training for teachers and shepherds will be August 17 at 7:00 p.m.

Room set up and decorating for our theme will be Monday, August 22 at 7:00.

Volunteers are welcome at all times!

Contact Linda Becker, or sign up on the Sunday School bulletin board in the narthex.



## BE the LIGHT for the AGLC Children!

Submitted by Kent E. Rhein-Medina, Christian Education Ministry Chair

Please prayerfully consider this opportunity to serve our community in such a powerful way by being a part of our children's faith formation.

Our congregation is looking to fill a critical role within our Christian Education Ministry team as Assistant Sunday School Coordinator for the 2016-2017 program year. The successful candidate will then move into the Coordinator position beginning about June 2017. This is a wonderful opportunity to be mentored by our current Coordinator, Linda Becker, before taking over the position yourself. It is a year to "learn-the-ropes" and ease you into the Coordinator role with great support behind you. Responsibilities include implementing the Sparks Sunday School curriculum, engaging volunteers for teaching/shepherding, planning rally day events, and directing the children's Christmas program.



This is a stipend paid position of \$60/month for the assistant coordinator and \$150/month for the coordinator. For more information, please talk with or email Linda. For a complete job description or to apply with a letter of interest/introduction (by August 12, 2016), please contact Kent Rhein-Medina, Christian Education Ministry Chair.



## VULNERABILITY AND FAITH

*“Vulnerability sounds like truth and feels like courage. Truth and courage aren’t always comfortable, but they’re never weakness.”*

– Brené Brown

This year’s women’s retreat focused on being vulnerable in our lives and in our faith. We asked the question: What does vulnerability have to do with faith? Based on the work on Dr. Brené Brown, a social work researcher and professor, wife, mother and Episcopalian, we learned about vulnerability through the lens of our faith. Continuing that conversation sounded like a good idea, so we are expanding the conversation to include the entire congregation with a sermon series this month.

Dr. Brené Brown talks about her own experience of vulnerability in several of her TED Talks (see YouTube) when she came face to face with the truths evident in her research – truths that she was comfortable analyzing from a distance, but which made her come undone when applying this to her own life. What she recalls is a breakdown/awakening that touched every part of her life – work, family, friendships and her faith. Here’s what she discovered – that while vulnerability can be scary, uncomfortable or downright terrifying,

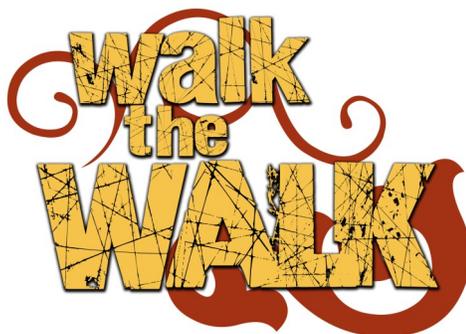
**“Vulnerability is the birthplace of love, belonging, joy, courage, empathy, and creativity. It is the source of hope, empathy, accountability, and authenticity. If we want greater clarity in our purpose or deeper and more meaningful spiritual lives, vulnerability is the path.”**

When I think of the woman at the well (John 4:1-42) I see a woman who was vulnerable in her encounter with Jesus. She did not hide the facts of her life, but met him with a childlike openness and wonder. When she had realized that Jesus offered the living water, she ran to the village to share that gift with others. She said, “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?” (vs. 29) This kind of childlike faith is one in which we open our hearts and our lives for God to enter. This kind of vulnerability makes it possible for forgiveness and reconciliation to occur, for healing to begin, and for people to move from being acquaintances to being friends. What does vulnerability have to do with faith? It turns out – it has everything to do with our life of faith. So that’s why we are dedicating three weeks in August to this topic.

August 7	Vulnerability in Love
August 14	Vulnerability and Courage
August 21	Vulnerability and Empathy

If you are a reader, I can recommend several books by Dr. Brown. The book that Pastor Chris Becker and I are currently reading is, *Rising Strong: The Reckoning. The Rumble. The Revolution.* (*If we are brave enough, often enough, we will fall. This book is about what it takes to get back up.*)

As always, I look forward to your feedback and conversation.  
Living Bravely In Christ, Pastor Julie Wright



## POKÉMON GO—PRAYER GO

By Pastor Chris Becker

I want to offer a way to pray the Lord’s Prayer in a new way. You may have heard about this Pokémon Go app for your phone that has you playing a game as you are out and about. Well, what would happen if we took prayer along with us as we moved about our day?

Martin Luther prayed the Lord’s Prayer every day. I was told he didn’t just

say the prayer over and over again, rather he pulled it apart and focused on one petition or segment of that prayer. So that is what I offer you. Pray this prayer for six days in a row in this way:

Speak each petition and then stop. Think and reflect about what you have just said. Ask yourself what does this mean for me today? Connect this part of the prayer with what is happening in your life at that moment.

**Day One: Hallowed be your Name.**

What does it mean to honor God's name? What does it mean to keep God's name holy or to respect it?

**Day Two: Your Kingdom come.**

How is God's kingdom different than what I am living under now? What rules my life? Why?

**Day Three: Your will be done on Earth as it is in heaven.**

How would the world be different if they acted out of God's will? How would my life be different if I acted out of God's will?

**Day Four: Give us this day our daily bread.**

What do I really need for each day? Am I content with what I have? Why? Why not?

**Day Five: Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.**

Who do I need to forgive? Who do I need to ask forgiveness from? What gets in my way of doing either one of those things?

**Day Six: Lead us not into temptation.**

What is my greatest temptation? What keeps me from asking for help?

**Day Seven: Deliver us from evil.**

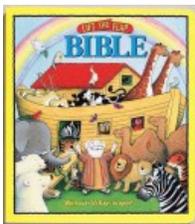
What is attacking you this day? Who do you need to help you overcome this evil?



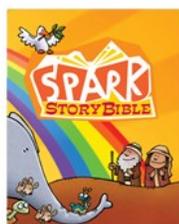
## Milestone Ministry Bible Distribution

### Sunday, September 11, 2016 –Rally Day

Milestone ministry covers many special occasions in a child's life. In September, we celebrate by placing the Holy Bible in children's hands. The Christian Education team selected the ages and the version of the Holy Bible we distribute. Each family will receive a personal invitation to join us on Rally Sunday, September 11. We invite you to join us at either the 8:00 a.m. or 10:30 a.m. worship service for this special gift distribution.



Toddlers will receive the Lift The Flap Bible.



3 year old children (as of Sept. 1) will receive the Sparks Story Bible.



Children in 3rd grade will receive the Spark Bible.



Youth entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade will receive the Lutheran Study Bible.

Please contact the church office if you are in need of a Holy Bible for your family.  
We love to share God's word with all.



It is amazing how much kindness 85 children, 31 youth volunteers, and many adult volunteers can “kick up” in 4 days. VBS 2016 Kickin’ Up Kindness was blessed with a wonderful week of songs, messages from Kid President and our very own Kid Kindness, Bible lessons, indoor and outdoor activities, and plenty of nice weather.

Due to the generous donation of supplies and money from our congregation and friends the children were able to assemble over 100 Kindness Boxes to be given to children entering homeless shelters and 85 blessing bags to be given to someone in need. Second Stork was the recipient of 65 assembled diaper/wipes bags for families in need as well as numerous sorted boxes of other baby supplies. Also, over 60 children, youth and adults packed many meals at Feed My Starving Children.

During our Kindness to Critters afternoon the RAD Zoo and Dodge Nature Center reminded us about the unique and wonderful critters around us and how we can treat them with respect and kindness.

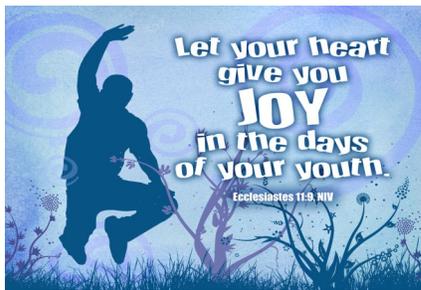
If you want to see more photos check out the video on our website at [www.aglcigh.org](http://www.aglcigh.org).

To quote one of the kid’s favorite songs from VBS – “We all need more kindness in this world.”

VBS 2017 is tentatively scheduled for June 19 – 22, 2017.



# From the Youth and Family Ministry Team



## YOUTH NEWS

### Upcoming Events

#### August Events

Details & Sign up on Youth Event Board

**August 14—Sunsets—**  
Pool Party  
1:30-4:30pm  
Hahnfeldt Hosting



**August 17—**  
Back to School Bash 2016  
Help fill backpacks that will be distributed

**August 20—**  
Back to School Bash 2016  
Volunteers are welcome!  
Sign up Genius found at <http://www.churchofstpatrik.com/BTSB/BTSB.htm>  
Or check in at the volunteer table day of event!



**August 28—**  
Free Concert ~ **Featuring Rachel Kurtz**  
Outside Concert 6:00PM  
Bring a chair and come for great music!  
Free Concert ~ Free Food

#### August Youth Birthdays

August 2— Jessica T.  
August 2— Caroline B.  
August 9—Sarah Y.  
August 13— Holland R.  
August 14—Olivia J.



*“God looked over everything He made; it was good, so very good!”*  
Genesis 1:31 The Message

#### September Events

Details & Sign up on Youth Event Board

**September 11—**  
Rally Sunday  
Sunday School kick off  
Bible Distribution



**September 14—**  
Confirmation starts

**September 18—Gertens Fundraiser**  
packet available



**September 18 - Sunsets** (third Sunday of the month) Opportunity for youth 6-12th grades –Friendship, Fun! Watch Youth Event Bulletin Board for additional info!

#### Stimulating Bible Verses:

“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.” Ecclesiastes 3:1

#### Inspirational Thought:

“I suppose whenever you go through periods of transition, or in a way, it’s a very definite closing of a certain chapter of your life—I suppose those times are always going to be both very upsetting and also very exciting by the very nature because things are changing and you don’t know what’s going to happen.”



-Daniel Radcliffe

#### Random Randomness:

A ducks quack doesn’t echo, and no one knows why.



Dear Amazing Grace Lutheran Church community,

Thank you so much for your love, care, prayers and support over the past 10 years! You made it easy to be your faith community's youth leader and very challenging to leave. The love shown by each of you models Jesus' love and it is echoed in everything done by this community. May God continue to bless you and all who connect with this beautiful faith group. I have so many special memories and sharing a word of thanks, just doesn't seem enough- please know each of you will continue to be in my prayers. I look forward to seeing where God will take our community in the future. Thank you and God Bless!

Merri Guggisberg

## Missions Updates...

### Justice Team Update and Invitation!

Members of Amazing Grace who have been engaged in planning and organizing action for justice in conjunction with the ISAIH organization of MN are finalizing plans for the remainder of this year and discussing plans for future action!

#### Joining God at Work in the World -- for Justice

While supporting a wider ISAIH agenda, the justice team at Amazing Grace is most focused on addressing the economic struggles for working families. We know that too many families are barely surviving financially, putting their mental and physical health at risk, putting our children and youth at risk, and putting our larger community at risk. Our government, our businesses, and each of us as individuals can do more to allow families to thrive.

- Paid family leave must be a priority in the next legislative session. We can ensure this by seeing to it that our elected state representatives and senators know this is important to their constituencies.
- Payday loans and profit schemes that take advantage of families and individuals must be addressed with protective measures, legislation, and education. We continue to pursue this with a spirit of learning and teaching.
- Earned sick and safe time has progressed with a Minneapolis ordinance that is among the strongest in the nation. Work is happening now in St. Paul that needs our support, and we can work to ensure this gets addressed at a state level to protect our suburban and greater Minnesota residents.
- Affordable childcare, continued awareness of mortgage lending practices, student loan debt, and other issues keeping Minnesotans from thriving are important for our discussion, awareness, and ACTION!

#### WHAT CAN WE DO? HOW CAN WE BE INVOLVED?

Amazing Grace congregants interested in learning more and contributing to the action for justice with our team are invited to attend a gathering at the Mark & Annie Morgan's house to get to know each other better, to cultivate a spirit of learning about the issues facing us, and to develop our strategy for taking action.

<b>When:</b>	August 10 from 6:30-8:30 p.m.
<b>Where:</b>	Mark & Annie Morgan's home
<b>Childcare:</b>	The Morgan boys (ages 14, 12 & 11) can help play with and entertain kids of preschool age and older in the yard and lower level of our home
<b>RSVP:</b>	Call Annie Morgan with questions or RSVP



## China Service Ventures

Submitted by Charlotte Gronseth

### SOBERING DEVELOPMENTS

In the sharing by the China Mission Team regarding their April trip to China, some may remember comments on the many government restrictions on Christians in China. One example: We learned that with the severe restrictions on the number of pastors, most churches depend on lay persons with no Bible training. Also when we worshipped in the small congregation at the foot of Rooster Mountain, we experienced (this is usual practice) the presence of a representative from the security office who kept a check on the service and listened in on our conversations.

We have now heard of a saddening development. The camps which had been planned for over 200 deprived youth were notified shortly before opening that they could not take place. No reason was given. Thus the next two weeks CSV's young and committed Chinese staff spent many hours going to each home to inform the would-be campers that the camp was cancelled. For them all—staff and youth—it was heartbreaking.

New laws are coming out in 2017. China Service Ventures is very concerned and praying for guidance. We ask Amazing Grace Lutheran to also pray for this concern. Thank you.



## Africa

Submitted by Pastor Chris Becker



### AMAZING GRACE RETURNS TO TANZANIA!

On the afternoon of August 14th 15 people will board a plane for the beginning of a journey which will transform their lives. Six people from our faith community (Helen Yotter, Mary Y., Abby G., Nancy Peterson, Tom Markahm, and I), the pastor from Newport Lutheran, and 5 members from Our Savior's in Hastings will join together for this mission trip. Our itinerary includes visiting Iringa University, formerly Tumaini University, a school of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania. We will experience life in a culture that will teach us to slow down and to cherish the moment through the relationships we encounter. We will spend 4 days in the village of Maguilwa where we will live and work alongside our

brothers and sisters in the Lutheran church and in the Maguilwa Area Secondary School ( a school we helped establish). Some in our group will teach a course on stress, some will teach a course on US government, one person will use his computer skills to work with the computer lab at the school, and I will be teaching 8-11 evangelists about Genesis 1-22. Our time will be rich with worship and fully aware of the simplicity of life without running water and limited electricity. We will also spend time working at the Lutheran orphanage in Iringa. Please pray for the growth and strengthening of faith for each of those traveling and for our brothers and sisters in ministry in Maguilwa.

Bwana Asifiwe (Praise the Lord!)  
Pastor Chris Becker



## Neighbors Inc.

Submitted by Lisa Barnhart

Thank you to everyone who volunteered to help serve meals to school children at Moreland Elementary! Your generosity of time and thoughtfulness of others is greatly appreciated!

Are you looking for other volunteer opportunities? Please check out the Neighbor's website ([www.neighborsmn.org](http://www.neighborsmn.org)). Opportunities are available for a one-time or short term basis, an ongoing basis and group or family opportunities.

### Upcoming Events:

- The Great Neighbors' Duck Races will once again be held during On the Road Again in South Saint Paul on Saturday, October 1.
  - The Walk to End Hunger at the Mall of America on Thanksgiving morning, November 24.
- For more details on these events, please visit the Neighbors' website.



Current Food Shelf needs: Baked Beans, tuna, pancake mix, syrup, personal care items and paper bags.

## AGLC Financial Summary

### AGLC Financial Summary through June 2016

Prepared by Tim Sanborn, Treasurer

Hard news is sometimes referred to as a bitter pill, and often we want the bitterness masked to make it more pleasant. But the pills themselves are harmless – the calories and problems are usually in the sugar. By choice, chance or circumstance, I'm not a baker. So I won't sugar coat it for you. The following numbers are Year-To-Date as of June 30<sup>th</sup>:

- ❖ Income: \$181,995 which is 84.3% of what was budgeted. June 30<sup>th</sup> 2015 AGLC income was \$197,825.
- ❖ Expense: \$210,503 which is 96.8% of what was budgeted. June 30<sup>th</sup> 2015 AGLC expense was \$196,807.
  - The majority of the expense increase from '15 to '16 occurred in staff services, not ministry team spending.
- ❖ Net Income: a deficit of \$1,600 was planned and is usual for this time of year, but AGLC has a \$28,508 deficit
- ❖ Projections: current 15% shortfall in Income would mean a \$50,000+ deficit by the end of the year.

Last year the Ministry teams were able to tighten their belts and cut a few items to ensure that our 2015 Expenses would equal our Income. This year that will not be the case as the ground we have to make up is too great and the total budget for the 6 Teams is about \$85,000 for the year, roughly half of which has already been incurred.

As always, please contact me or a member of the Council if you have additional questions or concerns about the budget. I would like to add that the overall financial strength of our Church remains strong and vibrant. Our assets and liabilities are well positioned to support us for many years to come. The year-to-date numbers above are primary indicators of our current cash flow and budget expectations.

*"Things rarely go exactly as we expect, but in the long run, they work out well for those who love God. His plan is higher than ours."* **Elizabeth B. Knaus, 5 Miles Round Trip: For Exercise and Quiet Inspiration**

#### **Please note:**

Income is made up of General Offering monies,

- does not include Designated Funds (VBS, family emergency, youth fundraising)
- or Other Income (interest income, gain/loss on investments).

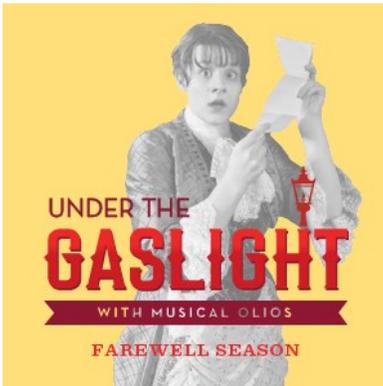
Expenses include the Ministry team budgets for:

- Youth & Family, Worship & Music, Christian Education, Stewardship & Evangelism, Business Management, and Church Properties, along with Staff Salaries.
- It does not include Other Expenses (Dedicated In/Out and Activity Accounts).



## Adult Fellowship Events

Submitted by Barb Malamen



### Summer Theater— Here Comes the Showboat!

Make plans to spend a summer evening on the Minnesota Centennial Showboat, “The greatest theatre on the water.” There are currently 30 seats reserved for the Saturday, August 20, 8:00 p.m. performance. This summer’s melodrama is Under the Gaslight. As always the performance includes delightful musical olios. You know you want to go, to boo the villain and cheer the hero. So mark your calendar and save the date, then sign up on the poster on the community bulletin board. Contact person: Barb Malamen.

## Council Corner



### Two Important Congregational Conversations

**August 7, 2016**

10:45 – 11:45 a.m. (after 9:30 a.m. worship)

**October 16, 2016**

9:15—10:15 a.m. (between services)

On Sunday, August 7th at 10:45 a.m. and on Sunday, October 16th at 9:15 a.m. the Church Council will host two important conversations about the staffing changes at Amazing Grace. Come with your questions. Come and learn about the opportunities we have to strengthen our ministry as we continue to join God at work in the world.

## We are Set Free – Now Let Us Live that Way

By Pastor Chris Becker

We tend to compartmentalize our life which works well if we are attempting to deny or repress our feelings. As we enter into a time of transition and change here at Amazing Grace, we as a community, and as individuals, will be experiencing a variety of feelings; sadness, hope, fear, grief, excitement and many more.

I have been with a small group of pastors over the last few years in what is called a “spiritual support group”. We share about our lives and faith and use a variety of readings that help guide our thoughts. Recently we have been reading a book called “A Path with Heart”, which comes out of the Buddhist tradition. We spend time connecting the author’s thoughts and relate them to our own Christian faith.

Here is one piece that struck me as I thought about change in my own life and in this faith community. It addresses what the author calls “The Near Enemies”. Take a look at it and reflect on your own life and faith.

*An example of near enemies can be seen in relation to the four states of Buddha described of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. Each of these states is a mark of wakefulness and the opening of the heart, yet each state has a near enemy that mimics the true state, but actually arises out of separation and fear rather than genuine heartfelt connection.*

*The near enemy of loving-kindness is attachment. We have all noticed how attachment can creep into our love relationships. True love is an expression of openness: “I love you as you are without any expectations or demands.” Attachment has in it a sense of separation: “Because you are separate from me, I need you.” At first, attachment may feel like love, but as it grows it becomes more clearly the opposite, characterized by clinging, controlling, and fear.*

*The near enemy of compassion is pity, and this also separates us. Pity feels sorry for “the poor person over there,” as if he or she were somehow different from us, whereas true compassion, is the resonance of our heart with the suffering of another. “Yes, I, too, together with you, share in the sorrows of life.”*

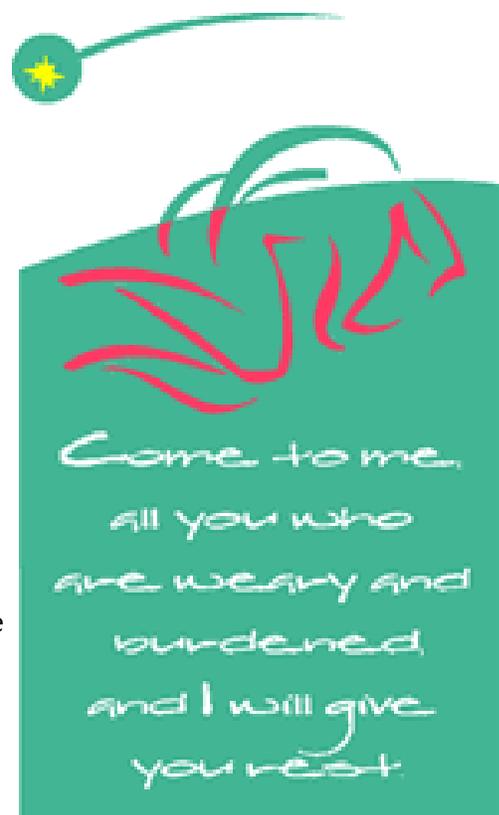
*The near enemy of sympathetic joy (the joy in the happiness of others) is comparison, which looks to see if we have more of, the same as, or less than another. Instead of rejoicing with them, a subtle voice asks, “Is mine as good as his? When will it be my turn?” – again creating separation.*

*Finally, the near enemy of equanimity is indifference. True equanimity is balance in the midst of experience, whereas indifference is a withdrawal and not caring, based on fear. It is running away from life. Thus, with equanimity, the heart is open to touch all things, both the seasons of joy and sorrow. The voice of indifference withdraws, saying, “Who cares. I’m not going to let it affect me.”*

*Our culture often teaches us that we can become strong and independent by denying our feelings. The compartments that these near enemies create cannot shield us for long from the pain and the unpredictability of life, but they will surely stifle the joy and open connectedness of true relationships.*

Jesus himself opened the door to a fuller life by inviting us to “Come unto me all who are heavy laden and I will give you rest...” Matthew 11:28-30. Embraced by the love of Jesus we are freed to fully live.

Pastor Chris



M a t t h e w 1 1 : 2 8



Dear Vacation Bible School Participants and Volunteers,

We greatly appreciate your support, as we wouldn't be able to provide the "diaper bags" and other items to newborns in crisis without you. In organizing your off-site event, you have generously gone beyond your own concerns to help others and collectively worked together to make our community brighter for those in need.

Sincerely,  
Marian Huber  
Volunteer Coordinator at Second Stork



**Pastoral Care—Focused Outreach**  
 Servant Ministry Coordinator:  
 Pastor Chris Becker

- Meal Coordinator: Lynda Bartlette
- Ride Coordinator: Norm Beckman
- Respite Care Coordinator: Judy Thompson
- Funeral Support Coordinator: Barb Malamen

**Hands and Feet Ministry—  
 Evangelism/Stewardship Team**  
 Coordinator: Pastor Chris

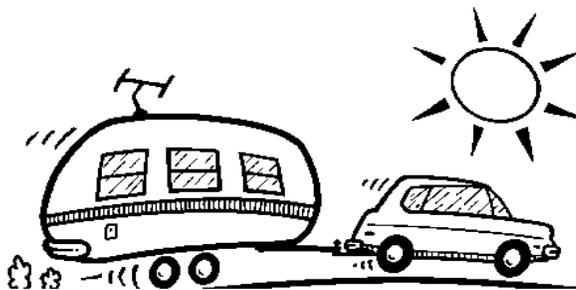
## Prayer Chain



**Prayer Concerns can be called in  
 to Mary Garfield at 651-457-7536.**

### God's Church Has Needs All Summer

As you travel this summer, remember your support of Amazing Grace. Our programs go on... Our expenses do too. It is important that you continue to make your regular gifts to church so we can continue to serve. Thank you!



**AMAZING  
GRACE**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

7160 South Robert Trail  
Inver Grove Heights, MN 55077  
Phone: 651-455-0093

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Joining God at Work in the World!  
All are welcome!!



**Website:**  
[www.aglcigh.org](http://www.aglcigh.org)

**Staff:**

Pastor—Pastor Chris Becker:  
[cbecker@aglcigh.org](mailto:cbecker@aglcigh.org)

Associate Pastor—Pastor Julie Wright:  
[jwright@aglcigh.org](mailto:jwright@aglcigh.org)

Administrator—Angy Thelemann:  
[athelemann@aglcigh.org](mailto:athelemann@aglcigh.org)

Youth and Young Adult Coordinator—  
In Transition

Finance/Office Assistant—  
In Transition

Building Supervisor—  
Norm Goetzke: [ngoetzke@aglcigh.org](mailto:ngoetzke@aglcigh.org)

Worship Musician: Brad Pipal  
Sanctuary Choir Director: Susan Young  
Children's Choir Director: Angy Thelemann

Sunday School Coordinator—  
Linda Becker: [lbecker@aglcigh.org](mailto:lbecker@aglcigh.org)

Vacation Bible School Co-Coordinator—  
Amanda Vesta: [avesta@aglcigh.org](mailto:avesta@aglcigh.org)

**Main Office Hours:**

(Typically)

Monday: Working Offsite  
Tuesday—Friday: 8:30 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

**Deadlines:**

The newsletter article deadline  
is always on the 15th of the month. Bulletin  
announcements or additions are due on  
Wednesdays.