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AMAZING GRACE

LUTHERAN CHURCH



SEPTEMBER 2016

Can We Talk?

By Pastor Chris Becker

That opening line was used by the comedian Joan Rivers for years. I use it so that you may appreciate the importance and the urgency of what I want to share with you. The work we do together in the name of Jesus Christ is essential. If you do not believe me simply ask the hundreds of people who receive support from this faith community.

A year ago we were invited along with 11 other congregations in the region, to participate in a "Creating Congregational Cultures of Generosity". They invited us because we have demonstrated that we are a generous group of people. Using the statistics from 2014 and comparing us with 24 other congregations who were similar in size and location, we were strong in our percentage of household giving, and worship attendance. We have responded generously when there have been urgent needs in people's lives and within our faith community. All that said, I share with you that over the last year our giving to the work of Jesus in the world has diminished.

We attempted to strengthen our attitude of generosity by bringing us face to face with those organizations that impact thousands of lives and whom we have committed to support. We introduced "Thank You" Sundays where we took time to offer words of thanks to those who have impacted our lives inside and outside this church. We hosted a Generosity workshop where over 40 people came and grew in their awareness of how a generous life is a healthier life. We shared stories from people in this

congregation who were directly lifted up and supported by the work we do together as a church. We wanted to build on a strength God has blessed us with. Yet, at this time our giving is down. The church leadership has been working to reduce expenses and keep us all informed of the need. We continue to support those outside ministries but recognize that we will have to reduce some of that support as well.

Our worship attendance is strong, we have many visitors who have come back again and again and who have expressed a desire to belong to this faith community, we have worked hard on a strategic plan for the next 5 years, and we continue to find creative ways to share Jesus with others. From my perspective I look out on a congregation that is becoming more and more diverse, growing in a variety of age ranges, and more and more committed to serve Jesus by engaging in the lives of people outside this building.

We have faced some changes recently in staffing, but we have three candidates so far applying for the role of Children and Youth Coordinator, and we are reshaping that role to direct more time towards our children and their families as well as our youth. We are exploring the possibility of bringing on a "Community Engagement" person who will both help us focus on our spiritual gifts and serve as a volunteer coordinator AND lead us to be an active witness to those hun-

dreds of people moving into our immediate neighborhood through all the housing being built. We want to be an aggressive church that helps shape the very community we worship in and serve. We have always been a learning congregation. Our children's and adult education is rich with variety and creative planning. We do not want to lose this element of teaching the faith.

I want to appeal to all of us who have committed to come together for the work of Jesus in the world. Our income has been reduced. As we all know from our own home budgets, that impacts everything from utilities, to building upkeep, to mission support. I am asking that each of us reexamine our giving patterns. At this follow-up session on Creating Congregational Cultures of Generosity, they gave me some potential giving figures. One figure caught my attention. If each household in our congregation increased their giving by ½ percent we would increase our annual giving by over \$69,000.

What that might look like is this: If you have a household income of \$35,000 that would mean an extra \$175 a year, if a household earned \$50,000 that would mean an extra \$250 a year. I could go on but I think you get my point. Our Year Round Stewardship Team has introduced another way to approach looking at our giving. They have asked each giving unit (household) to consider increasing their weekly giving by \$7. Doing the math $52 \times \$7 \times 125$ active Giving units, that amount would be \$45,500. This added giving would allow us carry out the mission we have chosen together to accomplish in the name of Jesus.

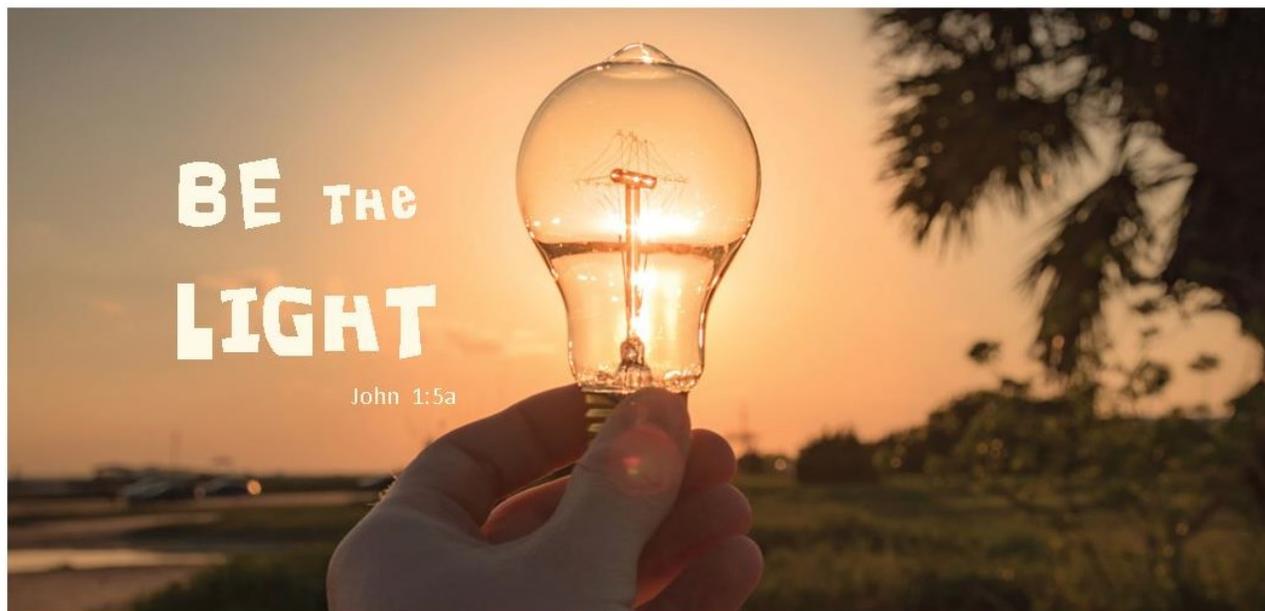
I do not know everything you are experiencing in life. I just know that we have been given much (Cam Kruse's words keep ringing in my ear) and God calls us to use our resources so that others may experience God's goodness. I also know that unless I try something I will never know if it will work. So, I ask that we would all try reviewing our giving and to try for a month or three months or more and see how our giving toward our common work impacts our personal lives.

God will provide! I believe that because God has provided for my needs all my life.

In the next few weeks and months we will be in conversation as a community on the next steps we will take as we hear God guiding and leading us. I pray that we come to those conversations and listen and ask questions and then make a commitment.

This year we will introduce a "Giving Plan" starting in September. We are asking each household to prayerfully consider what they would be able to contribute towards the common goal of joining God at work in the world. From that amount the church leadership will compose a 2017 budget. This is different than in the past when we presented an expense budget and we all voted on the bottom line. Now we will create those expenses out of what we receive from you as our potential income. I see this as a strong way of binding us together in our common mission to serve Jesus.

In Christ
Pastor Chris



Worship and Music Ministry Notes



Children's Choir Begins Sept. 28

By Louise Lentz
Worship and Music Chair

Our new children's choir starts up on Wednesday, September 28, with the first practice at 6:30 pm. Engaging activities for children ages 4 years to 7th grade are being planned along with music to enhance our worship services typically on the first and third Sundays each month. We are excited about hearing them sing for the first time on Sunday, October 16.



Worship Leader Training – Saturday, November 5

By Louise Lentz
Worship and Music Chair

On Saturday, November 5, we will conduct an “all hands” training for the congregation. This includes all those who currently serve in worship leadership roles (altar care, greeters, nursery, readers, sound system, ushers, and worship assistants) and those who are new to the roles. Come to discover how you can **Be the Light** this year by serving in a new role or continuing in

your current roles. Those who attended in March 2015 said the training was informative, engaging and they learned something new about their role. They enjoyed sharing ideas with others who serve, and the refreshments were tasty. Join us on Saturday, November 5, 9:00 – 10:30 am, for this important training event.



Now the Feast and Celebration!

By Pastor Julie Wright

The theme for 2016 is Be the Light -- not see the light, or shine the light, but **BE** the light. Why? Because this life of faith is a way of **BEing** in this world. As people who follow Jesus, we want to walk the walk, not just talk the talk. As we gather together each Sunday for worship, we gather together to be grounded in the life of Jesus. Worship is the lifeblood of this congregation. It's where we come to be filled up with God's love and grace, with holy bread and wine so that, filled with courage, we can be sent out to **BE** the light of Jesus in the world.

One of the gifts of this community of faith is a love and talent for song. From children through adults, we are a bunch of talented singers. With that in mind, we will be putting these God-given gifts to good use this year as we learn a liturgy called *Now the Feast and Celebration*, by Marty Haugen. Marty Haugen is a composer who wrote several of our favorite contemporary hymns. This is not a new liturgy, but may be new to some at Amazing Grace. To help us with the learning curve, the Sanctuary Choir will be learning this liturgy to help lead us.

In the month of October, we will sing this liturgy every Sunday. After that, we plan on using it once a month. This will add some variety to our worship time and help us give glory to God. The purchase of this liturgy is thanks to AGLC's Worship and Music Ministry Team and a generous memorial by the family of Sharon Hoven.

August Worship

Sunday	Theme	Lessons	Worship Services
September 4 <i>Pentecost 15</i>	“Following Is Hard, Really Hard”	Deuteronomy 30:15-20 Luke 14:25-33	8:00 am Abbreviated Worship with Holy Communion 9:30 am Worship with Holy Communion
September 11 <i>Pentecost 16</i> RALLY DAY <i>Bible Distribution</i>	“It Doesn’t Make Sense”	Jeremiah 4:11-12 Psalm 14 Luke 15:1-10	REGULAR SCHEDULE RESUMES 8:00 am and 10:30 am Worship with Holy Communion
September 18 <i>Pentecost 17</i>	“Guess What? We’re Getting Audited”	Jeremiah 8:18-9:1 Psalm 79:1-9 Luke 16:1-13	8:00 am and 10:30 am Worship with Holy Communion
September 25 <i>Pentecost 18</i> <i>Blessing of Strategic Plan</i>	“Bridging the Chasm”	Jeremiah 32:1-3a Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16 Luke 16:19-31	8:00 am and 10:30 am Worship with Holy Communion

Fall Worship Schedule

Starting September 11th

8:00 am Worship with Holy Communion

9:15 am Education Opportunities for All

10:30 am Worship with Holy Communion



Christian Education Ministry

WELCOME TO SUNDAY SCHOOL!

Submitted by Linda Becker, Sunday School Coordinator

You are invited!! Bring a friend or neighbor!! Join the fun Sunday mornings at Amazing Grace. You will learn about the love of Jesus for you and your family and how God has been our help for ages past and waits to be our help for years to come.

Rally Day, September 11, we will kick off our church theme for the year, “Be The Light!” On September 11 we join the national celebration of Service and Remembrance, meeting fire fighters and police officers from our community. We will create Honor Poles and Thank You flags to distribute to our local police and fire stations. Don’t be alarmed if you see a fire truck parked in front of church.

This is a perfect time to invite your friends and cousins to join us for Sunday mornings. You don't have to be a church member to be involved in our Sunday classes. Parents should come to the lower level for new and updated registrations.

Bibles for young Christians will be distributed on this Sunday during both services.

- Children from 18 months to 2 years old will receive a Lift the Flap Bible.
- Children ages 3 and 4 (if they did not receive a Bible last year) will get a Spark Story Bible.
- Third graders will receive a readers Spark Bible.
- Seventh graders will receive a large Lutheran Study Bible.

9:00 – 9:15	Donuts and juice served
9:15 – 9:45	Students downstairs to meet Shepherds and classmates
9:45 – 10:15	Students join adults in narthex for projects
9:45 – 10:15	Preschooler's Playtime on the playground

God bless your return to school and we'll see you Sunday!!



Confirmation Class for this year's 8th and 9th graders begins on Wednesday, September 14th at 6:30 pm.

Confirmation Sunday for those 10th graders affirming their faith will be Sunday, October 2nd at the 10:30 am worship service.

Please hold all these students in your prayers as they begin, affirm or continue on their faith journey.

Sunday Morning Bible Study

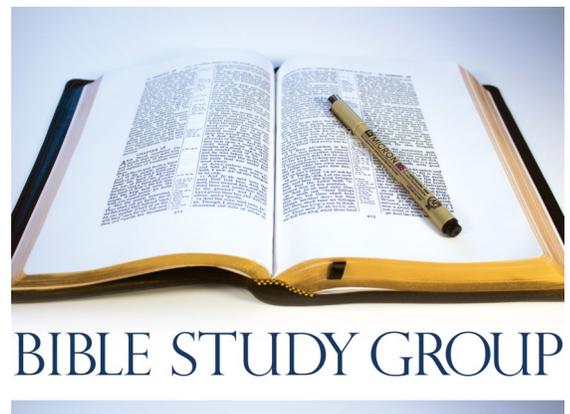
In our Sunday morning Bible study we will explore the various beliefs which the church affirms. We will connect those beliefs with our everyday life so that we are asking both "What does this mean?" and "What difference does this make?"

Tuesday Night Bible Study

This year we will look into the Reformation and study 1 and 2 Corinthians. We meet in the community room of Inver Glen Senior Living next door to the church. Come and join us at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesdays beginning September 13th.

Women's Bible Study

Our new year will begin the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 9:30 a.m. in the Upper Room. We will begin a study about when "God's Not Fair" and occasional home optional studies. All women are welcome!



Youth and Family Ministry



Children and Youth Coordinator

By Pastor Julie Wright

This summer we said thank you to Merri Guggisberg for her ten years of service as the Youth & Family Coordinator. Let's face it – she's a total rock star! You will still see Merri and her family at AGLC from time to time (she's still a member of Amazing Grace). We will be hiring a new Children & Youth Coordinator to work with young children and youth. As we sift through resumes and begin interviews, please pray that God would send the right candidate to Amazing Grace. In the meantime, if you have questions please contact Pastor Julie.

YOUTH FUNDRAISERS

Gerten's Poinsettia Orders

Stay tuned for information regarding one of the prettiest fundraisers of all – the sale of poinsettias for Christmastime.

It's Donut Time!

Youth, please visit the Youth bulletin board and sign up to bring donuts on a Sunday morning. This service is a fundraiser for youth activities and a fun way to bring smiles to pretty much everyone at Amazing Grace.

Questions? Contact Pastor Julie.



GOT SILENCE?

by Pastor Julie Wright

“Be still, and know that I am God!” -Psalm 46:10a



In a world filled with noise, activity and now Pokémon, how can families carve out some quiet to invite God into their lives? That's one of the questions asked in a July 16 article in Living Lutheran called Faith and Family: The God of Sheer Silence, by J. Arthur Blyth.

**If your home life is all verbal earthquakes
and putting out fires,
how will your family find space
for the God of sheer silence,
the still
small
voice?**

One idea Blyth recommends is to incorporate quiet time at mealtime. If you're wondering how to accomplish this when just getting everyone to the table at the same time can be a challenge, let alone all the wiggles and giggles that accompany family time, you're not alone. Try asking this:

Can everyone at the table close their eyes and start in silence, then open their eyes when ready but not break the silence until all at the table have opened their eyes?

When everyone at the table has opened their eyes, all say, “Amen.” Next, sing or pray the words of your family's grace or simply let the silence be your prayer.

Give it a try. Then share your tips on our Facebook page. Read more at: www.livinglutheran.org/2016/07/faith-family-god-sheer-silence/

Stewardship and Evangelism

Submitted by Judy Rhein, Justice Team



July 2016: Seeking God's Wisdom

By: Ruth Ivory-Moore, Program Director for Environment and Energy Policy

Please welcome Ruth Ivory-Moore to ELCA Advocacy! Ruth has joined our team as Program Director for Environment and Energy Policy! Ruth brings a background and careers in chemical engineering, and as a corporate legal counsel. Her legal specialties including climate change, commercial, contracts, environmental, and antitrust law. Ruth believes that "all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose..." (NRSV Romans 8:28). She feels that serving in the Environment and Energy Policy position is a blessing from God allowing her to use her diverse background to address critical issues.



As I walk down the sidewalk to find a place to eat lunch not far from the steps of the Capitol, I notice a squirrel that is leisurely sitting on the back of one of the benches. As I pass within three feet of him, he does not flinch or attempt to flee. Our eyes meet. He looks very content, as if to say "join me if you like, but I am here to stay." I elect to walk passed my animal friend to another bench that is well positioned under majestic shade trees. The temperature must be approaching 100°F, but there is a nice breeze that makes one forget the sweltering heat.

I begin to eat my lunch, and I notice black and gray colored birds scampering around and flying between trees. They seem to be at peace and happy. For a moment, I forget about the headline news: unrest across the waters; turmoil in our communities; and racial tensions that continue to exist. I marvel at God's creations (Genesis 1:1; Colossians 1:16). I marvel at the synchronization; the synergy; and the beauty.

But then reality hits. I am reminded that this squirrel and those birds are so content; the trees are providing shade; the wind provides cooling; all in nature working in harmony. They have no concern about the damage that climate change is doing to the environment. I am the one who needs to be concerned.

God calls on us to care for and protect all of creation. Should we not embrace this responsibility?

Nowhere is this calling more important than in our work of eliminating the causes, mitigating the impact, and implementing adaption measures for addressing climate change. While resolving to address climate change impacts on creation is not hard, the path toward a solution appears monumental. This is a challenge not seen by humankind before. A few recent news items help to shed some light on the complexity of the challenges our country faces in trying to develop innovations that will also address climate change:

Last year, Hawaii pledged to convert to 100 percent renewable power by 2045. The path to accomplishing this has not been mapped out. One major obstacle identified is the current power grid. Renewables will produce excess power and the grid was not designed to handle this excess energy. How is this excess power to be stored for later use?

The current Administration is attempting to make it financially easier to purchase zero emissions vehicles, that is, electric cars. But how does one really get to zero emissions? The electricity used to power these vehicles is produced by generators that are predominately fueled by fossil fuels. Renewable fuels account for only about 13% of the electricity generated.

Other areas to consider not in the news include:

What does global travel look like in a renewables world? How are passenger airplanes to be fueled? The fuel cell need would be too heavy.

What alternatives are needed to transition the use of everyday things made from hydrocarbons derived from fossil fuels that go into making items such as cosmetics, clothing, and medical supplies; food items such as artificial ripening of fruit; and food grade polymers for chewing gum base?

How is the displaced worker and the community whose livelihood (existence) depends on fossil fuels to survive? How do we help them to transition to other technologies?

These are only a few items to consider, which makes the task at hand daunting. **But we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to God's purpose (Romans 8:28). In carrying out God's mandate to be stewards we must take care of all creation, not leaving any-one or anything behind.** Now is a time for action that entails us using our God given intelligence and skills to devise solutions to address climate change from every angle.

Missions Updates...

World Hunger

Submitted by Zella Vandervort

Crafters Wanted



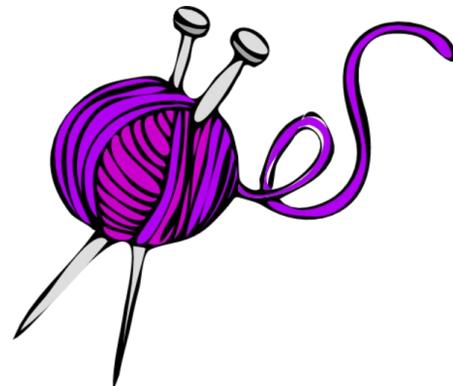
The dog days of summer are just beginning, but already it's time to think about the Fair Trade and World Hunger sale over the Winter Holiday season. Please consider donating a craft item or two to be sold in support of ELCA World Hunger. The annual Fair Trade and World Hunger sale runs Sundays, November 20th thru December 18th. Donations are welcome anytime. Please contact Zella Vandervort.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Submitted by Connie Raddatz

KNIT AND CHAT

Knit and Chat is meant to be a time set aside for the knitting of prayer shawls that our Pastors deliver to members who are ill or in need of comfort. We meet on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 10:00 am in the church Narthex. We chat as we knit so we develop a nice friendship as a bonus. Please call Connie Raddatz if you have any questions or would like participate in the KNIT AND CHAT team.



Business Management Team Update

Welcome and Thank You!

You may have noticed a familiar face in the church office in recent weeks. We'd like to officially welcome Trudy Johnson as the new Finance/Office Assistant. We're very blessed to be able to add her talents in this capacity.

We also want to thank Craig Yotter for the years of his support, flexibility, and patience. Craig has even volunteered to retain a few of his responsibilities, for which we are very grateful.



AGLC Financial Summary

AGLC Financial Summary through July 2016

Prepared by Tim Sanborn, Treasurer

“Past performance is no guarantee of future results”. Investment ads are seldom seen or heard without this ‘fine print’. The same is true of our annual budget. Pastor Chris makes note of some of AGLC’s revenue needs in the months to come in his current article and outlines some ways to increase our giving by \$45,500. Hopefully the following year-to-date income and expense figures will shed additional light on where we are currently at financially, and where we want to be by year end.

INCOME	year-to-date	85.9% of budgeted	\$35,585 under budget
EXPENSE	year-to-date	98.0% of budgeted	\$5,084 under budget (favorable)
Net Income	-\$30,501	budgeted YTD -\$918	end of July \$29,583 under budget
2016 projected:	Income -\$60,166	Expenses -\$10,430	Net Income \$49,736 under budget

The Ministry teams are diligently working on re-examining their budgets to see if there are any additional savings that can be realized. Please let me know if there are any additional questions or comments.

Council Corner



Another Important Congregational Conversation

October 23, 2016

9:15—10:15 a.m. (between services)

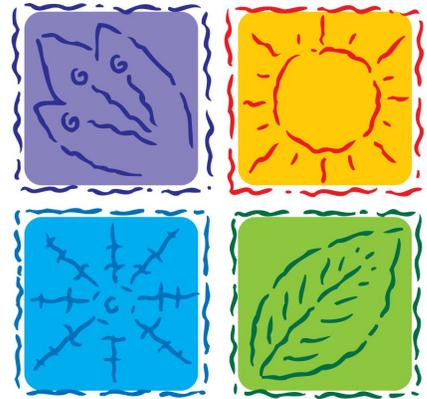


On Sunday, October 23rd at 9:15 a.m. the Church Council will again host an important conversation about the staffing changes at Amazing Grace. Come with your questions. Come and learn about the opportunities we have to strengthen our ministry as we continue to join God at work in the world.

From the President

By James Jeyachandran

“There is a time for everything
and a season for every activity under the heavens”.



Greetings!

I am very excited about the changes we have embarked on for the next couple seasons. Let us welcome Trudy Johnson; she has joined our team as Finance/Office Support Staff. We have started the process to hire a Children and Youth Coordinator. If you know anyone who would be great fit for this role and our community please reach out to me.

As Pastor Chris is wanting to scale back his role, we are blessed to have Pastor Julie to take on a full time pastoral role. We will be presenting a process/vote to call Pastor Julie Wright as a full time pastor and Pastor Chris Becker as Pastor Emeritus (Part time) starting in January 2017.

The community around our church is growing; it is a diverse population with young children (i.e. *Millennials*: a person reaching young adulthood around the year 2000).

Millennials desire a Christ-centered community. They value a community that moves beyond the surface and asks the hard questions and is an essential part of their lives. So we are working with the ELCA Synod to come up with financial partnership in hiring a Community Engagement Coordinator who will work with our members and engage with the community around us.

Though we will incur additional expense with this new position, I feel this is very critical for us to have a solid foundation to join GOD’s work in the World. You will be receiving a letter from our Stewardship team explaining how you can help to make this vision a possibility.

Though as a council we are excited about all the opportunities, we need your feedback, commitment and prayers in this exciting journey.

In Christ,
James Jeyachandran, President of AGLC

Fall Worship Schedule

Starting September 11th

- 8:00 am Worship with Holy Communion
- 9:15 am Education Opportunities for All
- 10:30 am Worship with Holy Communion



?? Bible Quiz ??

It’s intriguing to think of people in Bible times experiencing the same cycle of seasons we do. Which of these books *doesn’t* mention autumn?

- A. Matthew
- B. Jeremiah
- C. Proverbs
- D. Jude



Answer: A (See Proverbs 20:4, ESV; Jeremiah 5:24; Jude 1:12.)



**Servant
MINISTRY**

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



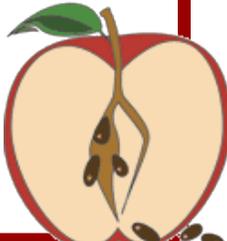
**Prayer Concerns can be called in
to Mary Garfield.**

**Be the
Light**



John 1:5a

Anyone can count the seeds in an apple, but only God can count the apples in a seed.



AMAZING GRACE

LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Inver Grove Heights, MN 55077
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Address Service Requested

Mailed on September 1, 2016



Amazing Grace Lutheran Church
Joining God at Work in the World!
All are welcome!!



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www.aglcigh.org

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jwright@aglcigh.org

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athelemann@aglcigh.org

Youth and Young Adult Coordinator—
In Transition

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Building Supervisor—
Norm Goetzke: ngoetzke@aglcigh.org

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

Sunday School Coordinator—
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Vacation Bible School Co-Coordinator—
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Main Office Hours:

(Typically)

Monday: Working Offsite
Tuesday—Friday: 9:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.
651-455-0093

Deadlines:

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