

April 2024

Grace Lutheran Church

# He Is Risen! He is Risen, Indeed!



Easter Sunday music at the Contemporary Service (pictured top above) and the Traditional Service (middle and at left) was glorious. Featuring the Praise Band above and Ringspiration (Bell Choir) middle and the Chancel Choir at left, along with special musicians playing tympani and horns.

Photos by Stan Long

# Holy Week Activities Herald Easter



Beginning with Palm Sunday (members entered the church with a palm leaf) on March 24, and ending the week with Maundy Thursday and the stripping of the altar by Ruth Smiley and Kathy Olsen, and finally Good Friday when the Passion account was read and everyone left the church in silence. We prepared for Easter sunrise and the day that Jesus rose from the dead.

See additional photos pages 1 and 3.



Photos by Stan Long

## Palm Sunday Leads Holy Week Activities

Pastor Rosy, right, leads Grace members in prayer outside before they marched in with palm leaves on Palm Sunday. Below, Lorraine Huynh helps Pastor Rosy read the Passion dialogue on Good Friday and Debra Stewart, accompanied by Robert, sings his haunting arrangement of "Not a Mumbling Word." Bottom photo shows narrative readings on Palm Sunday.



Photos  
By  
Pat Hope



# JOYFUL NOISE

BY SLADE TRAMMELL



## April Music Celebrates the Resurrection

After a somber and meaningful observation of the Lenten Season, we now find ourselves celebrating the glory of the Resurrection at Grace. Music in the month of April will reflect the joyful exuberance of this liturgical time and the beauty of the arrival of spring. Voices and instruments will combine to worship with all who join us. We truly believe that there is something in the music at Grace for everyone. This remains the ultimate goal of these ministries.



We are especially excited that the Flower Festival Music Program this year will showcase the ministries and gifts of our organist, David Ensley. A seasoned professional with a vast knowledge of music and liturgy, the program on April 27 is not to be missed! We also continue to emphasize that all musical groups within the church are open to all, and we ask you to prayerfully consider joining us!

## Two Grace Youth Receive First Communion



Landon Weber, pictured left, making communion bread for Maundy Thursday. He and Pravin Ajmeri, shown above with their moms, received First Communion from Pastor Rosy during the Maundy Thursday service, March 28.

Two pictures at left by Pastor Rosy

Picture above by Stan Long



## **Pastor Rosalina (Rosy) Rivera**

# **God Provides Strength We Don't Know We Possess**

*<sup>1</sup>God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. <sup>2</sup>Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; <sup>3</sup>though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult.* Psalm 46: 1-3



When I was a kid, I was obsessed with watching Saturday morning cartoons. From 7 a.m. - 12 p.m. each and every Saturday morning there used to be a host of cartoon selections. I sometimes wish they would come back, everything from "Bugs Bunny" to "School House Rock" (which I now possess on DVD's!). One of my favorites was "Popeye." He was a sailor with unusually large triceps and his archenemy was "Bluto." They both loved "Olive Oyl." Every week, Bluto would do something to put Olive Oyl in danger and Popeye would need to save her. He often needed extra strength to fight off the "bad guys"- but he couldn't do it alone. He would first have to eat "his spinach." He would crack open a can of spinach which would give him the extra strength he needed to beat the bad guys and save Olive Oyl week after week. I didn't realize until now how silly that show really was until I began typing the premise!

For Popeye, his strength came in a can of spinach. For us, it is in Jesus Christ.

When I was younger, I considered myself physically a very strong person. I seemed to be able to do things that other kids couldn't. As I got older, it became more important for me to be "spiritually" strong. As we age, physical strength goes away. There are certainly things that I used to be able to do that I can no longer do. However, with age also comes spiritual maturity. When we are willing to continually seek to deepen our faith, we gain the spiritual strength that can overcome ANY physical limitation. God is our refuge and strength. God provides strength that we don't know we possess when we cry out to Him/Her. There is no can of spinach that possesses more strength than the power of prayer, the strength of His/Her Word and the trust in The One who walked the walk for us.

I hope that throughout the Lenten season you have all been laying down your burdens, prayers and obstacles to God by placing them on the cross. Yes, it is a heavy cross now, but with God all things are possible. God desires to carry our loads and burdens so that we can dwell in His/Her light. Jesus is the Light of the World who came to set us all free. He died so that we can live. He paid the ultimate price so we can possess abundance of life.

This Easter season, may the God of grace, love and mercy continue to shower you with continued strength so that you may be able to stand strong when life happens. And let me be the first to say, I wish you all a blessed Easter!

Always a servant of Christ,  
Rev. Rosalina Rivera <>< (a.k.a. Pastor Rosy)

## **Grace Mission Statement**

**Love Jesus and help others love Him  
through word and actions.**

**Spring Cluster Meeting is April 20**

The Spring Cluster Meeting for Cluster 6 of the Women of the ELCA will be held on Saturday, April 20, 2024 from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 6632 Chapman Highway, Knoxville, TN.

Registration forms with more detailed information are available in the Narthex. For more information, contact Donna Hoglund at 931-248-5101. The cost of registration is \$10 which includes lunch. The registration deadline is April 6.



*April Birthdays*

Ricky Moua	4/01
Pamela Asher	4/06
Anne Douglas	4/08
Matthew Gurecki	4/08
Lindsey Burtis-Fuller	4/10
Heidi Joesten	4/11
Mike Nicol	4/15
June Peishel	4/15
Sean Moua	4/15
Mary Witherington	4/17
Cian Duncan	4/19
Becky Ball	4/24
Nancy Munro	4/27
Jill Moehl	4/28

*If you have a name you would like to add to the birthday list or a correction, please call the church office at 483-3787.*

**Sharing Abundance Stories:** As part of the emphasis on sharing abundance, the Stewarding Commission continues to look for stories about how God has provided abundance in your life, especially in the



context of the ministries of Grace Lutheran Church. Stories can be brief, a paragraph or two in length. Some suggestions for stories are:

- Write about a personal experience in which an opportunity to share abundance presented itself.
- Write about an observation of sharing abundance by another person or group of persons.
- Write about a discovery of ways to share abundance personally or as part of a group. Describe an opportunity for sharing abundance.

**Our praise band (New Creation) rehearses** every Sunday morning at 8 a.m. before the contemporary worship. We would love to add a guitar or bass player. Please contact our Director of Music, Slade Trammel, if you know of someone who may be interested.



## The President's Corner by Valerie Hansen

# Happy Easter! He is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!



Highlights from the March Council meeting include mostly updates from Commissions:

- Checks have been written to begin work on technology upgrades after Easter.
- Trying to arrange CPR training this summer in light of emergency preparedness.
- Donna H and Larry S will be attending the Second Harvest Conference. They will receive a \$100 credit for participating.
- Grace and Kern Methodist will be staffing the Ecumenical Storehouse in April.

Ruth S. updated us on the April 27, Flower Festival. Two new activities include: A representative from the Oak Ridge Public Library will be sharing their seed program with participants. Also Arissa Garden Club will do a demonstration on container gardening.

### **Council goals for congregation in 2024:**

- Increase attendance
- connect with unchurched
- increase commitment.

## **Food Pantry Served 131 Families in March**

The Food Pantry served 131 families in March. Those families consisted of 324 individuals. Of those individuals, 82 were under 17, 95 were over 60, and 147 were aged 18-59. In March, the food pantry received much USDA food that helped keep the costs down. The pantry was able to get meat, cheese, milk, green beans, corn, raisins, walnuts, almonds, split peas, and applesauce. The pantry does not need any more egg cartons at this time. Thank you to all of those who serve in the food pantry and who support it through donations of money and/or food items.

## **Finding Ways to Extend Invitations to Grace**

We're looking for ways to make it easier to invite a friend, acquaintance, or neighbor to Grace. Watch for news about this, but in the meanwhile, please consider inviting someone to an event or activity at Grace, not just worship services. Maybe the Frozen Head picnic or the Flower Festival would appeal to someone you know who isn't involved in another church or someone who hasn't been at Grace in person for a while. Perhaps an outing with Grace Hikers or some fun at Game Night (likely in May) would attract someone you know. Getting to know Grace folks through a fun activity can be a first step to trying out worship and getting more involved. Let's be an inviting church!

# EGGstrordinary Easter Egg Hunt







Photos  
by  
Christy Gipson

## Craft Items Needed for Festival Silent Auction



Donations of craft items or other art objects such as the Hugh Bailey pottery pictured here are now being solicited for the Flower Festival to be held April 27. Please contact Judy Rosenberg for further information, including what info is needed for the bidding sheet as well as when you may begin to bring the item(s) to church. Text or call Judy at (865) 310-2443 or email her at [dodger32@comcast.net](mailto:dodger32@comcast.net). Proceeds benefit the Flower Fund and Grace Writers.

Photo by Judy Rosenberg

## 'Reaching Out' Initiative to be Implemented

Proclaiming will implement a Council retreat idea involving all of us. This is an easy way to reach out to those who haven't been in worship in person lately and those known to be homebound or in assisted living and the like.

You will find notecards in a basket in the narthex and are asked to write a few lines of greeting after worship services, address the envelope (a directory will be right there), and take to mail it. A list will be available so you can see who others are writing to and avoid duplication. You may want to stash a few stamps in your wallet or purse to make it easy to mail on the way home!



# 6th Annual Flower Festival to Center on Caring for God's Creation

This year's Flower Festival on April 27, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., will again feature a plant exchange, a springtime music celebration, and more. The theme is "Caring for God's Creation."

New this year is an exhibit on container gardening by Arissa Garden Club. Carol Lorenc, president of Arissa, says "many of us now find that we are limited physically in our gardening plans; container gardening is a good alternative."

Oak Ridge Public Library's seed library, headed by William Gwin, promises to provide gardening information, as well as a variety of seeds.

Now is the time to start plant cuttings to bring to the plant exchange in the church pavilion: bring a plant, take a plant. If you don't have a plant to exchange, you may take a plant and leave a donation.

Grace's Photography Group is sponsoring a nature photography show that will be on display in the Fellowship Hall. Members of Grace Writers/Poetry Pie will provide the luncheon program, sharing poems that fit the Festival's theme. They will sell copies of their anthology, *In God's Hand*, following the lunch.



Invite your friends, family, and neighbors to the Flower Festival. A wide range of interests will be covered.



# What's New in Worshipping

Judy Goans

I hope you have been enjoying our wonderful Lenten services. Thanks to Slade, David, Pastor Rosy, and our choirs for these services. Now that we are in the Great Fifty Days of Easter, I hope you will all rejoice in the joyful music that goes with this season.

You may have noticed some new things in our worship services. Foremost among these is the inclusion of praying and anointing for healing on the third Sunday of each month. If you are interested in participating in this ministry, let us know, and we can put you on a roster. We are commanded to pray for one another, and doing so is a moving experience, both for the person who prays and the person who is prayed for. Worshipping held a workshop for people who wanted to learn about this ministry. Four people attended. If you are interested – and this doesn't require a commitment – and would like to attend such a workshop, please speak with me about it, and we can schedule a second session.

Growing out of our workshop on prayers for healing was a suggestion for a chance to practice praying aloud. Many people feel uncomfortable in the spotlight, so we will offer a workshop to help us get comfortable with this important practice of spiritual leadership. If you would like some example prayers and a chance to practice praying aloud in a safe space (i.e., not in front of a group), let me know, and we will set up a time to work together.

Our Flower Festival is coming up soon, so please plan to attend.

Beginning later this month, we will also practice pet blessings and in May, we will hold a workshop on planning your own funeral service. Stay tuned for dates!



## Grace Hikers Ahoy!

Would you like to walk in nature with other Grace folks now and then? Please let Ruth Smiley or any member of Proclaiming know if you're willing to plan and lead a hike or walk in nature once or twice during the remainder of the year. These can be of varying levels of challenge. Let's get Grace Hikers going!

Terry Domm will lead the kickoff of Grace Hikers on Sunday, April 14, at the Frozen Head Spring picnic event. Anyone interested in an opportunity to see abundant wildflowers or just take a good walk should meet at Shelter A at 2 pm for a trek up the Debord Falls trail and a bit farther. This should be an easy hike, about 2 miles round trip.

Please come and invite a friend!

See related story, Page 13.

# **GRACE SPRING PICNIC**

## **Frozen Head State Park**

### **Sunday, April 14**

Supper will be at 5 p.m. (Shelter A)

Come whenever you wish. There's lots to do.

Grace Hikers 2-Mile Hike to DeBord Falls 2 p.m.

(Meet at Shelter A)

For more info, go to [graceoakridge.org](http://graceoakridge.org)



# Milagro Objective: Break Cycle of Poverty

The April Love offering will be going to Milagro, a women's educational center at the Augustinian Lutheran Center of Guatemala in Guatemala City.

## MILAGRO

In Spanish, Milagro means Miracle. The MILAGRO Women's Education Center is located in the Lutheran Center in Guatemala City. Sometimes called Casa Milagro, MILAGRO is also an acronym:

M – *Mujeres* (women)

ILAG – *Iglesia Luterana Agustina de Guatemala*

RO – *Rompiendo paradigmas* (breaking paradigms)

At Casa MILAGRO, young rural women receive an education and develop a wide range of skills vital to a future with great possibilities. They learn skills to start a sustainable business and prepare them to be leaders in their families, churches, and communities. They will serve as teachers for future generations of young women and girls.

The objective of Milagro is to break the cycle of poverty in the rural areas of Guatemala where ILAG has a presence, bringing about changes in young women between 12 and 20 years of age. The young women selected will be active members of the Augustinian Lutheran Church of Guatemala and will have the opportunity to: develop their leadership skills, learn a trade that could provide them with an income to be economically independent, develop their self-esteem, learn to express their needs, know their civil rights as Guatemalan women, and be able to control their bodies as their property and nobody else's.

The vision is to transform future leaders and empower women today.

The Iglesia Luterana Agustina de Guatemala is a companion synod of the Southeastern Synod of the ELCA.



**April Love Offering – Milagro Women's Education Center**

# April Happenings

**Sunday School (Christian Education) for children and youth** meet at 10:00 a.m. in Jacob's Ladder room. If you have any questions about youth Christian Education, please contact Donna Gurecki (865-599-1238).

**The adult Sunday School class** meets in Room 101 at 10 a.m. every Sunday. Everyone is welcome.

**Is there interest in a CPR class??** Please let Donna Gurecki know if you would be interested in a class.

**Help for Lutherans in Ukraine:** Lutheran Disaster Response: Eastern Europe Crisis Response (ELCA.org/disaster). The ELCA is sending aid to our sister Lutheran churches in Ukraine and several neighboring countries. You can help!

**Blanket Workshop:** makes blankets for distribution to Lutheran World Relief. Meetings are on the first, third, and fifth Thursdays of the month from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Everyone is welcome to join in, or just stop by to see what is happening. Sewing skills are not required.

**Grace Photography Club:** The club will meet again April 20. Let Stan Long (865-356-2871, Longse@aol.com) know if you're interested in participating in this group.

**Grace Writers** meet April 1 in-person. **Poetry Pie**, which meets on Zoom will meet April 29.

**We are in need of people to assist with Altar Guild** set up for the 11:15 service in March.

Our **Praise band** rehearses every Sunday morning at 8:00am before the Contemporary worship. We would love to add a guitar or bass player. Please contact our Director of Music, Slade Trammel, if you know of someone who may be interested.

**OLSE at Grace**—Other Languages for Speakers of English is an outgrowth of our ESOL program. Russian meets Fridays at 10:00 a.m., on Zoom. Contact Nancy Munro (nbmunro318@icloud.com) if you would like an invitation to the Russian class. Spanish class is on hold until we find a new teacher.

**Proclaiming Commission is on the Move.** Proclaiming Commission has been helping spread the word about our Lenten and Easter schedules, the Easter Egg hunt, and the Frozen Head Spring picnic and hike. We're working to restart a hiking group and we've implemented welcome centers in the front and back vestibules. We're preparing to make it easy for members to write a note to someone they haven't seen in church recently or longer, the Reaching Out Initiative. See elsewhere for details.

## Via de Cristo April 18-21, 2024

Would you like to experience an amazing weekend of God's wonderful Grace?

Have an opportunity to be fully immersed in His love? Laugh, sing and fellowship with other Christians?

Then the upcoming Via de Cristo weekend is the place for you!

For more info contact Janet or Rick Rawl, Crista Froeling, Lorraine Huynh, Valerie Hansen, Stacey Garrick, Slade Trammel or Betty Anne Domm. More details will be provided closer to the weekend.

**Social Media Team Volunteers Needed.** We're looking for more volunteers for the Social Media Team. Do you know WordPress? Or have interest in learning it? Pam Williams needs backup as our webservant and WordPress is used for that. Do you enjoy Facebook or Instagram? We need one more person willing to post things about the church for 3 months at a time. Please let Nancy Munro or any member of Proclaiming or the folks listed here know of your interest. Help Grace be better known in Oak Ridge and the surrounding area.

**Coffee Fellowship: Greening Up.** Use a Grace mug for your coffee—be Grace Green! Please wash it at the narthex coffee closet sink and dry it—dishwashing liquid and a brush and dish towel are available to you there. Thank you!

**Publicity Help.** Do you need help with publicity for an event or activity at Grace? Here are the folks you can give the pertinent information to:

Website: Pam Williams

Facebook/Instagram: Stacey Garrick (schedules team)

NextDoor: TBD

Press Releases: Pat Hope

This Week at Grace: Pam Woodard

Information for press releases needs to get to Pat Hope about 2-3 weeks in advance if possible; she must send to the newspaper usually at least a week in advance.

**2024 Flower Calendar**— There are plenty of spaces on the 2024 flower calendar in the back hallway. Sign up today. You may sign up for a Sunday to provide flowers in honor or memory of someone, or to celebrate a special event. The member donation of \$25 provides flowers for both the contemporary service and the traditional service.

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Phone: 865-483-3787

E-mail: [graceortn@comcast.net](mailto:graceortn@comcast.net)

Website: [www.graceoakridge.org](http://www.graceoakridge.org)

**BOTH SERVICES ARE NOW IN THE SANCTUARY**

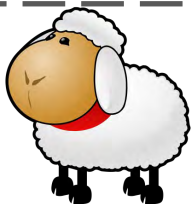
**9:00 a.m. Contemporary: In Person, Sanctuary**

**11:15 a.m. Traditional: In-Person, Sanctuary**

Services on YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHKKSX\\_JwSTrvl-LqdrbGlw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHKKSX_JwSTrvl-LqdrbGlw)

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**Want to win a gift card?  
 Find the three sheep.  
NOTE: We are continuing  
 this game for awhile (to  
 use existing gift cards).**

**The one pictured here doesn't count.**

The three shamrocks in Mar. were on Page 5, 6, 8.

**Congratulations to past winners:**  
**JoAnn Wright — March Shamrocks**  
 Linda Long — February Hearts  
 Crista Froeling — January Snowmen  
 Susan Gunning — Dec. Poinsettias  
 Anne Douglas — Nov. Fall Leaves  
 Bethany Lemons — October Pumpkins  
 Betty Anne Domm — Sept. Coffee Cups  
 Pastor Paula — August Hot Dogs  
**NO CONTEST IN JULY**  
 Anne Douglas — June Caps  
 Rhonda Ashburn — May Hearts

See if you can find the three sheep.

Please send the page numbers where you find them to Pat Hope ([thetwohopes@aol.com](mailto:thetwohopes@aol.com)) by April 30. Only email or text messages (865-310-0722) accepted. Prize to be awarded in May.