

May 2023

Grace Connections

Lutheran Church
Champaign, Illinois

Resurrection Life

Easter is a long season. It took up most of April, and it will take up most of May as well. Thematically, the first few Sundays of Easter are about coming to grips with the reality of Jesus' resurrection. Then the focus changes to the "now what?" question. What does it mean for us that Jesus did not stay dead? How do we live our lives differently when we trust that our baptism into Jesus Christ ties us to his death and resurrection, so that his fate becomes our fate? What does it mean now that death is not the final chapter for us?

One thing Jesus' resurrection does *not* mean is that we simply have our ticket punched for heaven and can now get on with the things *we* want to do in life. That would be to turn God into something like a cosmic insurance agent. With insurance agents, once you're paid up for the year you can forget about them until next year's payment is due. And if you set up automatic renewal, you might not have to think about them even annually! To be sure, you might call to mind your insurance policy from time to time, and it might affect your behavior when, say, you are contemplating some DIY electrical work on your home and don't really know what you're doing. My life insurance policy, as another example, does not allow me to do risky things like sky diving, meaning that it will not pay my beneficiaries if I die as a result. So I won't be going sky diving (and that's not the only reason!). But beyond such instances, you don't tend to give your insurance agent much thought. That is, unless a crisis strikes and you need their help, as a few of you have experienced recently. Then you are in regular contact until the crisis passes and the damages are addressed.

But that, of course, is not the kind of relationship with God that Jesus invites us into. We are invited instead into a friendship with Jesus (see [John 15:15](#)) that is a partnership in God's mission to love and save the world. The point is for us to have life, as we heard John tell us at the end of the Thomas story on the 2nd Sunday of Easter ([John 20:30-33](#)), "life that really is life" ([1 Tim. 6:19](#)). And that kind of life is to be found not by pursuing our own personal (or partisan, or ethnic, or national) agendas, but by listening to the voice of the Good Shepherd, as we read on Good Shepherd Sunday. And when we listen to *that* voice, and not all of the other competing voices around us, faith takes hold of us, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and that life of loving the world together with God becomes ours.

+ Pastor Repp

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God Connections

Faith, Worship, Music, Study, Prayer

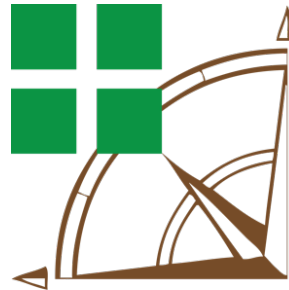
Final Greetings from Andy

Dear Grace,

Just a note to thank you for being such a fabulous congregation to serve these past three years! It's hard to believe it's been three years, and an entire lectionary cycle! Each year has been uniquely different: my first we were live streaming with no one in attendance but a handful of us. Last year we were back, but masked and distanced. This year I feel like I got to meet many of you for the first time now that we can see each other's faces! Starting this position essentially online proved to be a memorable experience. Because we made only virtual choirs that first year I actually felt like I learned individual voices more than any choir I've ever had, because I was listening and mixing together all the individual tracks. I will fully admit that I'm glad we're back to "normal." In some sense, it's nice to have those virtual choirs as a quasi time capsule to remember our time together. I'm so grateful for a relatively normal year this year--especially the opportunity to present the Charpentier in December and Schütz in April. I would guess most church choirs in the country would be unable to do that music. I'm grateful that Grace was able to host my DMA recital this year as well! My family and I are especially grateful that we were able to move into 911 this past summer. You rescued us when we needed it! My memories of getting a doctorate will forever be intertwined with Grace! It has been a privilege to shepherd your long tradition of high quality church music for God's glory. I wish you the best for an abundant future.



Grace and Peace,
Andy



ON THE WAY

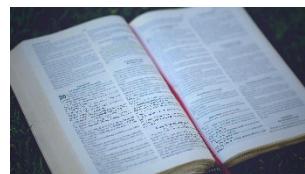
On The Way is Grace's opportunity to inquire about, explore, or deepen your understanding and practice of the Christian faith. Each session includes discussion, reflection on the Gospel reading for the coming Sunday, and directed prayer. We will meet on Mondays in May (except for May 29) at 7 p.m. in the Chapel. Join us as we focus on living out our life of faith in light of Jesus' resurrection.

Manna & Mercy Sunday School

Manna & Mercy will meet on May 14 and 28. Join us in the Hoffmeister Room at 10:45 (or soon thereafter) or join us online using the Grace Meeting Zoom link as we continue this fresh look at the story of God revealed in the Bible.



WELCA NEWS: Faith Circle



Faith Circle will be Tuesday evening, May 16, beginning at 7 p.m. in the narthex. The lesson leader is Mary Jo Erickson, and the hostess for the evening is Dorothy Townsend. All are welcome. Attending via Zoom is also a possibility. Hope to see you there!

Community Connections

Fellowship, Fun, Congregation News, Intercessory Prayer

Annual Congregational Meeting

Join us May 7 after the service in the Fellowship Hall for Strategic Plan progress and next step and finish off with fellowship luncheon. There is a sign up sheet in the Narthex for volunteers for set up, clean up, and to bring a dessert. See Claire Vail with questions.

The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held after service on Sunday, May 21 at 10:45 in the sanctuary and via Zoom (use the Grace Meeting link). Please join us- your attendance counts.

Congratulations and Thank You



We have been most fortunate to have Andrew Bruhn with us for the past three years as our Music Director. He has been director, composer, and trumpeter for us and, most important, he has shared his knowledge of Lutheran liturgy and hymnody with us. On the 14th of this month Andy graduates with a Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Illinois. He has accepted a position as Assistant Professor at Illinois State University School of Music. There will be a reception for Andy on May 14 during coffee hour—please come to thank him and wish him well!

Goodbye from Jessica

Dear Grace,

I want to thank you all for the great opportunity to work and serve at this church for the past year. I have learned so much and will be always thankful for the interactions with you all here, and the amazing building and sanctuary that everyone does a wonderful job of stewarding for the community.

I pray that we can be in touch, and I know that God will extend his loving care to Grace Lutheran in the future and years to come!

Blessings and joy,
Jessica

**The Grace office will be closed on
Monday, May 29 for Memorial Day**

Monthly Finance Report

	CURRENT MONTH	YEAR-TO-DATE
REVENUES	\$18,996.67	\$60,017.30
EXPENSES	\$22,198.67	\$74,514.83
NET	(\$-3,202.00)	(-\$9,497.53)

March Income was less than expected (budgeted \$23,216.67) and Expenses were slightly less than expected (budgeted \$23,980.93). Our deficit for the end of March is **\$-9,497.53**.

Our 2023 budget was adopted with a planned deficit of **\$-9,171**. But at the end of March the expected deficit would only be **\$-2,292.78**

Respectfully Submitted,
Debbie Peterson, Treasurer

Farewell to Jessica

Jessica Hunt, our office assistant, has resigned as of April 28. She has been a dedicated member of our church team. We wish her well in the next steps of her journey. May the Peace of Christ be with her this day and evermore.

Stitch & Craft

The Stitch & Craft group meets the second and fourth Fridays of the month, unless cancelled. Next meetings will be May 12 and 26, and they will be held in the Narthex at 7 p.m. Please come join us!

Grace Meeting Zoom Link and Web Pages and Access Links and passwords are available at Email version of Grace Connections.

Women's Spring Brunch at Good Shepherd

The Women of the ELCA (WELCA) group at Good Shepherd is having its annual spring brunch on Sat., May 6. We would like to extend an invitation to the



women at your church to join us for that event. We are also inviting women from St. Matthew's in Urbana. We thought it

would be a good time for fellowship for women from our three churches.

The brunch will be from 10 am to noon in the Fellowship Hall at Good Shepherd (2101 S. Prospect Ave. in Champaign). We will be serving breakfast casseroles, fruit salad, and various pastries/baked goods. There is no cost. Please contact Nancy Holm at nlholm@comcast.net if you would like to attend or have questions. After the brunch we will be putting together Lutheran World Relief personal care kits that we have collected supplies for if you would like to stay to assist us with that. Hope to see you then!

Easter Fellowship “Thank You!”

Extending warm thanks to everyone who helped make the Easter Sunday “Coffee Hour Plus” fellowship time so successful! Many people participated in helping to set up, prepare delicious food items, serve, and clean up. As Claire always says, “Many hands make light work!” This was truly evident! Thank you so much!

-For Parish Life Committee, Kathy Bowersox

Prayer Requests

We have two formal ways of praying for one another at Grace. One is in the Sunday morning worship service, where we pray for people by name in the Prayers of Intercession. They will also be listed in the emailed and printed versions of GraceNotes, but not in the web version.

Please send prayer requests for the Sunday-morning prayers to Jessica at office@glccu.org. We also have a tab on our website for prayer requests that you can access at <https://glccu.org/prayer-requests/>.

World Connections

Service, Advocacy, Ecumenism, Learning

GLC Food Pantry Monthly Update

Food Pantry Numbers

March 30: 33 families / 116 individuals
April 6: 65 families / 247 individuals
April 13: 33 families / 98 individuals
April 20: 43 families / 174 individuals



The GLC Food Pantry is very thankful for your continued support and prayers on behalf of this important ministry. Interested in donating tangible food items? If so,

please consider purchasing a bag of fresh apples or fresh produce and leave them on the large island in the south kitchen with a note labeled GLC PANTRY.

Your financial contributions and generosity help support the weekly distribution of emergency food to those in our community experiencing food insecurity.

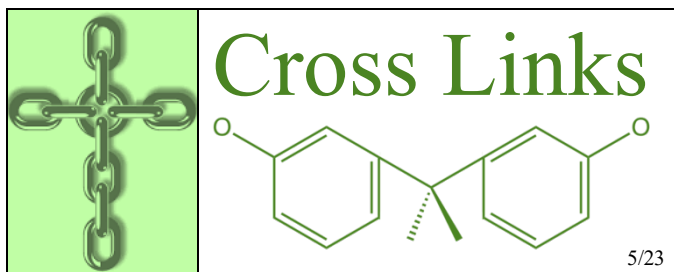
Your GLC Pantry Board,
Kathy Bowersox, Jim Fleming, Dale Herrstrom,
Karen Krusa, Royce Wilken

God's Work; Our Hands:

The Social Ministry Committee will again provide the opportunity to honor or remember your mother and other special women in your life with the gift of love



and caring for the homeless, refugees and those who have lost so much due to tornadoes and floods. Blankets can be purchased for \$10 on April 30 and May 7 and 14 in the Narthex. Or you may call Carol Shupp. Cards to send to honorees are also available.



I have mixture of things for you this month with no common theme beyond the overarching goal of this monthly page to highlight how faith and science can be in constructive conversation. I hope you'll find something here that captures your interest. And if you happen to come across something that would be good for a future edition, please pass it along.

BLESSING SCIENCE

[Science for the Church](#) this month links us to [this inspiring story](#) of a recent (2019) Nobel Prize recipient in Physics, an active member of a Christian congregation in Windsor, Ontario, who is frequently called upon to talk about her understanding of the relationship between faith and science. The first link above obviously draws closely from the second, but also includes discussion of science as a Christian vocation and provides an extended blessing for the science and scientists through which God is blessing the world.

COSMOLOGY FOR SEMINARIANS

The *Clergy Letter Project (CLP)* points us to [this lecture in the "Epic of Creation" series](#) offered by the Center for Advanced Study in Religion and Science and hosted by my seminary, The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. The lecture introduces the scientific understanding of cosmic origins in conversation with the history of theology, and is premised on the conviction that seminarians ought to at least be minimally conversant with this branch of science, since they are called to make sense of the biblical creation stories to a modern audience that takes science seriously.

A similar effort in this direction is happening here on the University of Illinois campus. The Institute of Genomic Biology is beginning a [Genomics for Faith](#) workshop series for Faith Leaders. I'll be attending the introductory session on May 17. Pastors aren't the only "faith leaders" in congregations, so those of you who are leaders at Grace might consider attending future sessions. (Registration for this first session closes on

May 1, so if you opened your Newsletter as soon as it came you might still have time.)

As long as we're looking up at the stars, which we were before the last paragraph, you might be interested in [this video](#) introducing Br. Guy Consolmagno, a.k.a. the Pope's astronomer, the head of the Vatican Observatory, which I featured in a past edition of CrossLinks. And if you like that, you might be interested in [this recent lecture](#) delivered by him at Anselm House on the campus of the University of Minnesota.

"JUNK SCIENCE"

Another contribution from *CLP* points us to a [recent CNN opinion essay](#) by a pair of law professors, which calls our attention to how scientific consensus is being ignored by some judges in the current attempts to outlaw all abortions nationwide, and replaced with fringe theories and unsubstantiated assertions. This is an old tactic, employed for many years in the debate over evolution, and more recently during the COVID pandemic in the opposition to masking and vaccines. As the *CLP* founder notes, "Regardless of your opinions about abortion, I trust that you favor discussion and policy based on the best science has to offer."

Also in the *CLP April newsletter* is news about three failed attempts by state legislatures, and one that is still pending, to impose creationist teaching on state education systems.

MORE FAITH, SCIENCE, AND AWE

Following up on a theme from last month's *CrossLinks* comes a recent commentary by the president of the Museum of Science in Boston, Tim Ritchie, on the web site of public media station WBUR. The title of the piece conveys much of its message: "[Science and the sacred aren't in eternal conflict. They are siblings, born of wonder.](#)" Noting the limitations of science, Ritchie writes, "We need something in addition to science, a basis for justice and a source of love, if we are to build communities worth living in." He suggests that this might come out of a dialogue between science and "the sacred."

In a similar vein is the final item in the [Week in Review for April 15-21](#) on the Mockingbird website. Item 6 at the bottom discusses a couple examples of the "Christianity of Science," i.e., how science has been influenced by the values and world-view of the Christian Faith.

+ Pastor Repp

May 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 9:30am Worship (Hybrid)- In Person & Live Stream 10:45am Adult Sunday School 12:00pm Women's AA 5:00pm Fifth Feast	1 7:00pm On the Way	2 4:30pm Exec. Committee 6:00pm Sweet Adelines	3 Bulletin Deadline 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	4 10:00am Food Pantry	5	6
7 9:30am Worship (Hybrid)- In Person & Live Stream 10:45am Communion Distribution 10:45am Fellowship Event/Meal 12:00pm Women's AA	8 10:00am Food for Seniors 6:30pm Finance Committee Meeting 7:00pm On the Way	9 6:00am Food for Seniors 1:00pm Hymn Selection 2:00pm Worship & Music 7:00pm Council	10 Bulletin Deadline 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	11 10:00am Food Pantry 7:00pm Community Choices	12 4:00pm Organ Recital 7:00pm Stitch & Craft	13
14 <i>Grace Food Pantry Sunday</i> 9:30am Worship (Hybrid)- In Person & Live Stream 10:45am Manna & Mercy 12:00pm Women's AA	15 6:00pm Property Committee 7:00pm On the Way	16 6:30pm Sweet Adelines 7:00pm Faith Circle	17 7:00am Food Pantry Truck Delivery 10:00am Comrades of Art Bulletin Deadline	18 10:00am Food Pantry	19	20 Newsletter Deadline
21 9:30am Worship (Hybrid)- In Person & Live Stream 10:45am Annual Meeting 12:00pm Women's AA	22 10:00am Food for Seniors 7:00pm On the Way	23 6:00am Food for Seniors 6:30pm Sweet Adelines	24 Bulletin Deadline	25 10:00am Food Pantry	26 7:00pm Stitch & Craft	27
28 <i>World Hunger Sunday</i> 9:30am Worship (Hybrid)- In Person & Live Stream 10:45am Manna & Mercy 12:00pm Women's AA	29 <i>Memorial Day</i> Grace Office Closed	30 6:30pm Sweet Adelines	31 Bulletin Deadline	1 10:00am Food Pantry	2	3