

Grace Lutheran Church
1930 Hillside Ave
Niskayuna, NY 12309

16

Grace Happenings



January 2011 Newsletter



Grace Happenings

Pastor's column – January 2011

May God bless you all in the coming year! The blessing that is our community came home to me especially throughout Advent, beginning with our Chrismon-making party, continuing into the fun of our smorgasbord and sanctuary decoration, our Sunday School pageant, and culminating in our Christmas Eve worship, where joy and inspiration were palpable.



There is certainly a Spirit here at Grace. I've been told the Holy Spirit works through God's people and can best be identified only in retrospect. Looking back, I'm bold to say I've seen some Holy things. May blessings continue.

This being the New Year, we are hearing about (and perhaps making) resolutions – lose some weight, begin an exercise program, and the like. It seems people want to jump start their own blessings. Now I've come to a point in life where I'm fairly sure that with me, what I see is what I get. What becomes more important than changing is remembering what's important.

In that spirit, I'll share some pithy thoughts. Some I've come across. Some I've modified; some I've made up. I hope some hit home, and others make you smile. Above all, I hope some of these contribute to your own blessings in 2011!

- Life isn't fair, but it is still good.
- When in doubt, just take the next small step.
- Take pictures. Years from now, you'll thank yourself.
- Life is too short to waste time being angry with someone.
- Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.
- You don't have to win every argument.
- When it comes to chocolate, resistance is futile.
- That would be dark chocolate – it's a health food!
- Make peace with the past so it doesn't haunt the present.
- Everything can change in the blink of an eye. But don't worry: God doesn't blink.
- You can get through almost anything if you just stay put in today.
- Over prepare, and then go with the flow.
- No one is in charge of your happiness except you.
- A question to ask: "In five years, will this matter?"
- And in the heat of an argument ask: "In five minutes, will this matter?" Often, it won't.

Grace Lutheran Church is an inclusive community grounded in the love of God and committed to welcoming all people regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, creed, age or physical ability. We encourage all people to share in thoughtful worship, relevant education and service through faith in action.



January 2011

Sunday	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
2 – 2 Christmas 9:00 AM Adult Forum 10:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service – Holy Communion <i>SICM Emergency Food Donation</i>	3 8 PM AA Meeting	4	5 7:00 PM Choir Practice	6	7 1:00 PM Women's Study Group 8 PM AA Meeting	8
9 – Baptism of Our Lord 9:00 AM Adult Forum 10:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service – Holy Communion <i>Immediately following Worship Service we will "undecorate" the church</i>	10 10:30 AM Salvation Army Soup Kitchen 6:00 PM – First Monday Pot-Luck 8 PM AA Meeting	11 6:30 – Council Meeting	12 7:00 PM Choir Practice	13 Deadline for reports for Annual Meeting	14 1:00 PM Women's Study Group 8 PM AA Meeting	15
16 – 2 Epiphany 9:00 AM Adult Forum 10:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service – Holy Communion <i>Bethesda House Sandwich Making</i>	17 7:00 PM – Book Group 8 PM AA Meeting	18	19 7:00 PM Choir Practice	20 February Newsletter Materials Due	21 1:00 PM Women's Study Group 8 PM AA Meeting	22
23 – 3 Epiphany 9:00 AM Adult Forum 10:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service – Holy Communion <i>Congregational Meeting preceded by Pot Luck Lunch</i>	24 8 PM AA Meeting	25	26 7:00 PM Choir Practice	27	28 1:00 PM Women's Study Group 8 PM AA Meeting	29
30 – 4 Epiphany 9:00 AM Adult Forum 10:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service - Holy Communion	31 8 M AA Meeting	Feb 1	Feb 2 7:00 PM Choir Practice	Feb 3	Feb 4 1:00 PM Women's Study Group 8 PM AA Meeting	Feb 5

GLC Council Meeting Minutes Recap
Tuesday, December 7, 2010
Submitted by Chris Powell

Pastor Hahn opened the meeting with the sharing of Kyries (prayers) and Glorias (thanks), and prayer.

The Council meeting minutes for November were approved.

Treasurer's Report: Bob Powell noted that income and expenses for the November were as expected.

Budget Report: Glenn Gerber reported that there have been 24 pledges for 2011 received to date equaling \$77,678 (four are new pledges), and that six pledges alone account for \$54,000. Report approved.

Glenn Gerber reviewed the **Proposed 2011 Budget**, a few changes were made and will be incorporated in the proposal. Final approval will be made by the congregation at the **Annual Meeting on January 23**.

Pastor's Report:

Pastor noted that there has been a family request for baptism for three children to be held at Grace.

A Mutual Ministry committee will be organized to strengthen the Pastor/Congregation relationship.

A Council retreat was proposed for sometime in February.

The Grace Outreach Strategy team has met and has proposed several ideas to revitalize our relationship with the community.

Building-Use Request: The local Depression/Bi-polar Support Group has requested the temporary use of our building for weekly evening meetings (Thursdays) for one year while their current location is under renovation. Council unanimously agreed.

Upcoming dates:

Salvation Army Soup Kitchen – January 10 (10:30-1:30 p.m.)

“First Monday” Pot Luck Supper – January 10 (6:00 p.m.)

January Council meeting – January 11 (6:30 p.m.)

Deadline for reports for annual report: – January 13 (email to church office)

Annual Congregational Meeting preceded by Pot Luck lunch: – January 23 (following worship)

- Forgive everyone everything.
- What other people think of you is none of your business.
- However good or bad a situation is, it will change.
- God loves you for who you are, not because of anything you did or didn't do.
- Your children (and grandchildren) get only one childhood: make them memorable.
- Read the psalms. They cover every human emotion.
- Get outside every day. Miracles are waiting everywhere.
- Envy is a waste of time. You already have all you need.
- Take a deep breath. It calms the mind.
- Take another deep breath, smile, and say “aaahhhhh.”
- Now and again, gaze at the sky.
- Life isn't tied with a bow, but it is still a gift.
- All that truly matters in the end is that you have loved and are loved.
- Why? God knows. Really! And that's O.K.

Pastor Hahn

*Pastor Hahn is looking for
photos of Grace activities for a visual
Annual Report*

*If anyone has any please email them or
loan prints to Pastor*

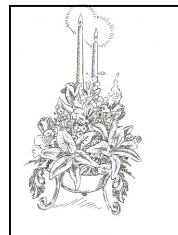
Grace Happenings

Published ten times per year

By

Grace Lutheran Church1930 Hillside Ave.,
Schenectady, NY 12309**Pastor Dan Hahn**Paul Motto
Organist & Choir Director**Judith A. Peck**Administrative Assistant
Email: office@graceniska.org
visit us at: www.graceniska.org
Phone: 518-372-0244**2009 Congregational Council
Officers and Members:**Mary Kelly, **President**; Cathy Joynson, **Vice-President**; Christina Powell, **Secretary**.
Council Members: Mary Gray, Glenn Gerber, Cynthia Nimmer, Shelley Hebert, Mike Perry,
Christian Hogrefe, Rachel DeTeso-Mathis, and Ellen Cash
Congregation Officers: Robert Powell, Treasurer, Bob Couchman, Asst. Treasurer, and Bill Hebert,
Financial Secretary**Altar Flowers January 2011****1/9—Glenn Gerber in memory of Cynthia Gerber**

If you wish to sign up to provide flowers for the Altar in honor of a special event or in memory of a loved one, there is a sign up board to the right as you go out into the Narthex. You will be billed directly by the florist. The altar flowers are generally taken to the sick or shut-ins after the service. Thank you.

**Financial Report**

Submitted by Glenn Gerber

Grace 2010 income and expenses against goals:

<u>Overall Budget</u>	<u>November</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>	<u>YTD Projections</u>	<u>YTD Actuals</u>	<u>Differences</u>
Income	\$ 10,317.	\$ 115,400.	\$ 98,048.	\$ 93,044.	-\$ 5,004.
Expenses	\$ 9,713	\$ 151,547.	\$ 134,255.	\$ 123,759.	- \$ 10,496.
	Difference	-\$ 36,147	-\$ 36,207.	-\$ 30,715.	
Envelope					
Giving (Included in above total Income amount)					
	\$ 9,373.	\$ 105,250.	\$ 86,876.	\$84,265.	-\$ 2,611.

Overall budget income and envelope income for November were as expected, but there remains an approximate \$ 2,500 to \$5,000 shortfall relative to the projected range. Also as expected projected and actual income is trailing projected and actual expenses based on the approved 2010 budget.

While results appear to indicate otherwise, actual year-to-date income and expense items are basically tracking expected variances.

The Financial Team is working diligently to manage expenses against income. By the time you read this it will be close to the end of 2010. Grace members will have basically completed all pledge and non-pledge giving for 2010. Hopefully all of you meet your 2010 pledge/non-pledge donation to keep Grace's shortfall as small as possible. Actual 2010 results along with the proposed 2011 budget will be reported and presented at the annual; congregational meeting in late January 2011.

Continued from Page 11

On the income side, the proposed 2011 budget reflects:

No change in Weekly Offering income is consistent with the decrease in attendance and member giving Grace has experience in the last few years. Except for 2008 and 2009, when we used the Mission in Transition Team (a gain of \$40,220), the congregation has been operating in a deficit budget mode for the past few years.

Shortfall in income during 2010 necessitated the transfer of \$32,155 from our investment assets (Mission Plus Bond Fund) to cover expenses.

Keeping the anticipated income for 2011 the same level as 2010 presents certain risks since to date only about 25 pledges have been received, six of which make up 50% of the estimated weekly offering giving.

Income vs. expenses, as presented in the 2011 proposed budget, anticipates the need of a possible withdrawal of \$37,583 of invested assets (Mission Plus Bond Fund) to offset the forecasted deficit.

On the spending side the proposed 2011 budget reflects:

Council has requested that our Mission Support to Upper NY Synod remain the same as in has been for the past several years. The same holds true for our donations for Community Outreach support. These are important attributes of the Church. No amount is budgeted for a Habitat for Humanity "build". Should this project be undertaken a special drive may be implement at Grace for this activity.

Budgeted amounts for Current Ministries and Pastoral Services remain the same as budgeted for 2010.

While there has been no announced increase in the cost of living we do feel it is important to recognize the contribution our organist and church office administrative assistant contribute to our assembly. A modest 2.5% increase has been included in the Music & Worship and Administration budgets. Also in the area of Administration we are continuing to strive to balance the increase in the cost of supplies (mainly paper costs) with the need to maintain our communication and outreach activities.

Church Facility and Maintenance remain unchanged in the 2011 proposed budget based upon current year spending, anticipated price increases, and our continued efforts to reduce costs.

For comparison purposes the 2011 proposed total spending budget is \$5,428 greater than 2010. Total anticipated spending of \$148,543 forecasted for 2011 does not necessary mean that the spending level will actually be that amount.

A final budget proposal will be prepared for Congregation Council and Congregation approval in January 2011 after December 2010 income and expenses are finalized.

The Finance Team: Glenn Gerber, Bob Powell, Bob Couchman, Mike Perry

January 2011 Birthdays

- 1/3—Josie Moore
- 1/5—Karen Hosmer
- 1/7—JoAnn Koenig-Hagymas
- 1/8—Don Faulkner
- 1/10—Ellen Cash
- 1/17—Christine Tobiessen
- 1/19—Joanne Augstein-Collins
- 1/20—Dennis Perham
- 1/23—Charles Madsen
- 1/24—Cynthy Nimmer



Bethesda House Sandwiches

Sandwiches will be made after church on Sunday January 16. They will be delivered to Bethesda House on Monday by Roland and Agnes Peteler.

We will be undecorating the church immediately following the service on Sunday, January 9. Please plan to stay for a few minutes to help put our Christmas decorations away and to dismantle the trees. There will be snack type foods to fight the "hungries" while we work.

Altar Flowers Dates Available for 2011

The GLC Altar Guild invites members and friends to **sign up now to donate Altar Flowers throughout the New Year.** The Flower Chart is located in the Narthex on the wall to the left of the entrance to the Sanctuary, next to the door leading to the downstairs. The normal cost per arrangement is \$19.00. If you would prefer to donate a special arrangement, you are welcome to call Felthousen’s Florists (our supplier) directly at 374-4144 with your preferences. There are several dates still available for January and throughout the year. Please **print your name and in whose honor/memory, etc. very clearly.**

The Altar Guild is also looking for **more “Cool-Whip” type containers** so that the flowers maybe transferred from the glass dishes and then delivered to shut-ins, etc.

Altar Guild Seeking Members

If you have a little time on Saturday mornings (or early Sunday mornings), for a month at a time or so to help set up the Altar for Sunday worship and afterward dismantle and clean/store the Communion items, etc., you are most welcome to join other volunteers at Grace as a member of Altar Guild. This task is both an honor and a privilege, as one member said. There is a detailed list of tasks involved for those new to this service and it doesn’t take long before these tasks become automatic. Please consider volunteering to help and invite a friend or spouse to partner with you. See Marion Elliott for questions or to sign up. Any Altar Guild member will be happy to work with you to get you started.



Treasurer’s Update

by Glenn Gerber & Bob Powell

On January 23rd we will be holding our annual congregational meeting to review and approve the congregation’s budget for 2011. The proposed budget reflects the continued economic difficulties and the changing nature of Grace Lutheran’s membership while striving to maintain our various ministries and programs. This article is an overview of the 2011 proposed budget that has been approved by the congregational council and provides a brief discussion of the issues it represents. Hopefully, this summary will help you prepare for the more detailed discussion that will be presented at the annual meeting.

Highlight* Differences made up with Mission Plus Bond Fund.

Category	2010 Budget	2010 Projected Actual	2011 Proposed Budget
Income			
Weekly Offering	\$103,750	\$101,400.	\$101,400.
Special Offering	1,300.	1,400.	1,400.
From Investments	1,300.	900.	900.
Other Receipts	9,050.	7,260.	7,260.
Total Income	\$115,400.	\$110,960.	\$110,960.
Spending			
Mission Support	\$7,000.	\$7,000.	\$7,000.
Community Outreach	3,500.	3,500.	3,050.
Current Ministries	2,400.	1,340.	2,400.
Pastoral Services	80,673.	79,996.	80,880.
Music & Worship	13,916.	13,766.	14,235.
Administration	14,670.	10,623.	11,390.
Church Facility	15,728.	14,155.	15,828.
Church Maintenance	13,660.	12,735.	13,760.
Total Spending	\$151,547.	\$143,115.	\$148,543.
Expenses exceed income by:	\$36,147.*	\$32,155.*	\$37,583.*

JANUARY 2011 MINI-NEWS
The Home Furnishings Program

Warehouse update:

Despite having had a couple of effective workdays (special thanks to Union Presbyterian Church members on 12/2 and the large group from the Unitarian Society on 12/11!) our warehouse is still stuffed to the gills with furniture donated through the Regional Food Bank, all of it needing to be unboxed and assembled. There is so much *stuff* that we could use hardy assembly workers (we have no heat or plumbing) on a daily, weekly, monthly or occasional basis to get these things moving out to those in need. **If you are handy with tools and looking for a project, we have a job for you!** – individually or in any groups you can put together. Please contact the HFP office at 346-2444, email homefurninc@aol.com, or call Peg Miller at 785-4460 if you are able to help.

Apologies again to those waiting for us to pick up furniture donations at this time. We are short on delivery truck run volunteers especially in this season, and we are jammed up in the warehouse, so if you need to move items faster than we are able to get to you, we will understand, and appreciate your thinking of us anyway.

Needs of the month: large pots and pans (for rice and spaghetti), towels and wash cloths, pot holders, can openers, flatware, wastebaskets and small appliances such as toasters, irons, coffee pots.

Salvation Army Lunch Volunteer Opportunities

Grace Church has committed to serve lunches at the Salvation Army in downtown Schenectady on **January 10, March 14, and May 9 in 2011**

Volunteers already on my email list will be notified of the upcoming SASK and will be asked to get back to me if they are able to participate. People not already on my list but who are interested in this or future dates should contact me (372-4804) for inclusion. No one is committed until they reply after my initial notification.

We are always looking for soup makers (the recipe is VERY easy—mostly opening cans and heating up. You will be reimbursed for your expenses.), brownie makers (family-size batches), and worker bees (from 10:30 a.m. until after clean-up, approximately 1:30 p.m.). You can volunteer for any or all of the above tasks.

This important mission is funded mainly by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans and their support has been crucial in keeping this program running for so long at Grace.

Submitted by
Chris Powell

The **GLC Book Group** will meet at the home of Cynthy Nimmer, 2148 Morrow Ave., Niskayuna, at 7:00 p.m. on **Monday, January 17** to discuss ***CUTTING FOR STONE***, by Abraham Verghese.

About the book, as one reviewer writes:

Abraham Verghese turns his formidable talents to fiction, mining his own life and experiences in a magnificent, sweeping novel that moves from India to Ethiopia to an inner-city hospital in New York City over decades and generations. Sister Mary Praise Joseph, a devout young nun, leaves the south Indian state of Kerala in 1947 for a missionary post in Yemen. During the arduous sea voyage, she saves the life of an English doctor bound for Ethiopia, Thomas Stone, who becomes a key player in her destiny when they meet up again at Missing Hospital in Addis Ababa. Seven years later, Sister Praise dies birthing twin boys: Shiva and Marion, the latter narrating his own and his brothers long, dramatic, biblical story set against the backdrop of political turmoil in Ethiopia, the life of the hospital compound in which they grow up and the love story of their adopted parents, both doctors at Missing. The boys become doctors as well and Verghese's weaving of the practice of medicine into the narrative is fascinating even as the story bobs and weaves with the power and coincidences of the best 19th-century novel.

All members and friends of Grace are welcome to join in this discussion. Call Cynthy (370-5766) for directions or to let her know you'll be there, or just show up. The more there are, the better the discussion.

Annual Meeting - January 23, 2011

Mark your calendars. The Grace annual meeting to review results of 2010 and to approve the budget and other important concerns for 2011 is scheduled to be held immediately following the Worship Service on January 23. We will have a pot luck luncheon and the meeting will follow. Bring a dish to share and your place settings.

All chairpersons, council members, or others who have information to include in the Annual Report are urged to get all and any information completed early. Deadline for reports to our Administrative Assistant, Judy Peck, is **January 13, 2011** (Send via email to djpp1975@nycap.rr.com or leave a copy on the desk in the office.)

Women's Study Group

will resume our discussions on *Virtues & the Fruit of the Spirit* on Friday, January 7th at 1 pm at Cynthy Nimmer's home.

We are beginning Week Four: The Theological Virtues: Faith & Hope. Please work through at least 3 days worth and we should be set for a good discussion!

It's not too late to join the group! One *week* in the book lasts several sessions so we will be in this workbook for awhile yet.