

GRACE UMC, LASALLE IL 61301

PASTOR:

Rev. Dr. Solomon Sudhakar, PhD
solomonsudhakar@yahoo.com
773 936 8979

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR:

Gina Locati

Grace United Methodist Church
1345 Chartres Street
LaSalle, IL 61301

Phone: 815 223 1001

Email:

gracelasallechurch@gmail.com

Website: gracelasalle.com

Office Hours:

Monday – Friday 8am – 4 pm

Worship Times

Sunday 9:00 AM



PASTORAL NEWSLETTER

February 2023
Grace UMC, LaSalle

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. Isaiah 58: 6 – 9

Dear Friends in Christ:

Greetings!

Welcome to the month of February. Very soon we are entering the sacred season of Lent this year. February 14th is the Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday this year is on February 22nd. We will be having a service in our church at 5: 30 pm and together will prayerfully enter the season of Lent. Lent is usually a time when we give up something, some people fast, and some practice meditation and spend time in prayer. Lent is also a time when we can focus on ourselves, look deep into our spirits, and invite and realize the presence of Christ in our lives. Lent season is also a good time to decide to live as channels of God's good news in the world. The passage above from the book of Isaiah refers to the kind of fasting and practice that the LORD requires of us. If we read carefully, and prayerfully the passage again, we can plan how we will spend the season of Lent this year. May our God lead and guide each one of us.

We will begin our Lenten Bible study from Feb 19th at 10:30 AM each Sunday through April 2nd. This Bible study will be on Jesus' final days, Based on the Book "**Entering the Passion of Jesus**" by Prof. Amy-Jill Levine. In this study, we find that every move Jesus made was filled with anticipation, danger,

and the potential for great loss or great reward. Jesus risked his reputation when he entered Jerusalem in a victory parade. He risked his life when he dared to teach in the Temple. His followers risked everything when they left behind their homes, or anointed him with costly perfume. We take risks as we read and re-read these stories, finding new meanings and new challenges. I encourage you to be a part of this study, books are available in the church office.

Our 2023 PLEDGE campaign is still in progress. If you have not turned in your pledge card and want to pledge, please get it to us as soon as you can. I encourage each of you to prayerfully consider again this year, to pledge and support our church and its ministries, including the Summit Learning Academy – a ministry of our church. A BIG THANK YOU to all who already did! I want to remind you all that in spite of the many good things we experienced as a church, we are missing several members, who are yet to come back to church. Last year we also had several members who passed away and I request you to kindly lift their families in your prayers. This year the reduced attendance and loss of several members had a drastic effect on our finances, offerings, membership, and budget in general. As of now we reduced a significant amount of our spending and trying to be good stewards of our finances and we are faithfully continuing several of our outreach ministries. I urge you personally to make a pledge and support our church during this challenging year.

The scripture, on several occasions, encourages us to give to the house of God and assures us of God's blessings to be cheerful givers. The scripture also teaches us that we honor God with everything that we own and teaches us to be good stewards of all the gifts we receive from God. All that we give back to God is out of what we receive from God! Being a good steward of God's gifts in our lives is an attitude and way of life that please our God.

Finally, I wish you all a Blessed season of Lent. Continue to pray for one another and for our church. God Bless!

Pastor Solomon.

A Message from our New Bishop.

Dear Siblings in Christ,

These are days for lament, and renewed commitment to justice. I lament the murder of Tyre Nichols at the hands of the officers in Memphis. I lament the stress officers are experiencing. I lament the loss of a son and father. We need to affirm that Black Lives Matter and our systems and relationships must act accordingly. Today at our Leadership Development training in the Prairie North District, we lifted a prayer shared by Rev. Violet Johnicker of Rockford Urban Ministries. Feel free to pray and use this, if possible, in worship tomorrow. May our actions produce equity that makes Christ known. Thank you for your ministry.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Schwerin". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Dan" and last name "Schwerin" clearly distinguishable.

Dan Schwerin, Bishop
Northern Illinois Conference UMC

A Prayer of Lament for Tyre Nichols and A Call for an End to Police Brutality

By

Rev. Violet Johnicker of Rockford Urban Ministries

God of Love and Justice,

We cry out to you in anger, pain, grief, and desperation as we remember your beloved son Tyre Nichols, murdered by police officers in the city of Memphis.

We strive to understand the stress which all such officers experience as they work to serve and protect their communities.

We mourn for the mother of Tyre Nichols, who he called for as he was brutally beaten after a traffic stop.

We mourn for his four-year-old son, who has been denied a life with his father.

Pour out your spirit of peace and comfort over all who grieve his death, trusting that You who know what it is to lose a son stand in solidarity with them.

Almighty God, we give you thanks for the protesters and advocates calling for an end to the sin of police brutality. Protect them and give them your strength. This is not the world that you desire for us, and we cannot passively shake our heads at the news as we move on to the next prayer.

We condemn the systemic evil of white supremacy, a force so strong that it works within institutions through people of any race.

We decry the way police violence has been normalized, knowing there is pain for oppressor and oppressed.

You created each and every person good, in Your image. Call us again to live up to Your dreams for us. Empower us with Your righteous anger, moral courage, and holy strength to change racist and violent systems that cause harm to Your beloved Black children, and to all of us.

Let the reactions of our communities move from "thoughts and prayers are not enough" to "thank God the church turned their prayers into action and transformed the world."

Even in our lament, we are people of hope.

Amen.

UMC Lectionary Planning Notes for February 2023

5 February 2023

**THEME: You Are / Glimpses of the Kin-dom
FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY**

Isaiah 58:1-12

Psalm 112:1-10

1 Corinthians 2:1-16

Matthew 5:13-20

12 February 2023

**THEME: But I Say / Glimpses of the Kin-dom
SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY**

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Psalm 119:1-8

1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Matthew 5:21-37

19 February 2023

**THEME: Super Sunday / Glimpses of the Kin-dom
TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY**

Exodus 24:12-18

Psalm 99

2 Peter 1:16-21

Matthew 17:1-9

22 February 2023

**THEME: The Fast We Choose / Learning to Live Inside Out
ASH WEDNESDAY**

Isaiah 58:1-12

Psalm 51:1-17

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

A PRAYER FOR THE BEGINNING OF LENT

God of Eternal Love, We have made our commitment to You, and have started a new journey into purposeful growth. But, we know that if we are to remain faithful we need Your help and Your strength. So, we ask... Teach us to pray with faith and read Your Word with understanding. Teach us to worship with passion and gather together with love. Teach us to give generously, serve compassionately and use our time mindfully, so that we may reflect Your goodness, and that others may discover Your grace through us. In Jesus' Name. Amen. *Written by John van de Laar and posted on Sacredise.com.*

26 February 2023
THEME: If You Fall Down / Learning to Live Inside Out
FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

Psalms 32

Romans 5:12-19

Matthew 4:1-11

Around the Conference

- **Bishop's Days on the District** - Clergy 10:00 am, Laity 7:00 pm unless otherwise noted.
 - **Prairie South** - Wed., Feb. 15 Sycamore UMC
- **Laity Convocation** - Sat., Feb. 11 from 9 am - 12:30 pm Available online and at three in-person locations (Barrington UMC, Disciples UMC in Mt. Morris, IL, and Faith UMC in Orland Park, IL **Location Change*). This year's theme is Thinking outside the Church: Making Community Ministry Happen. The guest speaker is David Teel, Director of Laity & Leadership at Discipleship Ministries.



"TOOT YOUR HORN" By **Elizabeth Schuetz**



"Toot Your Horn"

It's not that you toot your horn, but it's who you toot your horn for – yourself or God?



Do you make God smile when you toot your horn?

Family News

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED- If you are interested in working in our Nursery during Church Service, Please contact Gina at 815-223-1001 or email at gracelasallechurch@gmail.com.

Wednesday Evening Service- We will be pausing our Wednesday Evening Services until Mid February. More information will be given at a later date.

Dry Pantry/ Winter Warmth - Thank you all for making this a successful ministry! We are helping so many families with our donations daily! We currently have helped over 2000 people since this ministry has begun! THANK YOU! Donations needed are blankets, new socks, shoes, boots, Jackets, and Children's coats. Dry Pantry donations of, Hamburger Helper, Instant potatoes, Pasta Sauce, Pasta, cereals, Tuna, spaghetti-o's, crackers, dish soap, and Laundry soap, along with toothbrushes and toothpaste.

Pledges- WE ARE ½ WAY THERE!! The 2023 PLEDGE campaign is still in progress. If you have not turned in your pledge card and want to pledge, please get it to us as soon as you can. Remember, things change, and no one will hold you to your pledge. If you chose not to pledge, and that is more than ok, you can just fill out the top and write NO PLEDGE on the form and just return it to the office. Thank you

Valentine Pictures Wanted!- Help us Celebrate all the Love this Valentine's Day! Share your pictures of you and your Loved Ones with us. We will be posting all the pictures on the bulletin board outside the Church Office. Please place your name on the back of the pictures and we will return them to you at the end of the month.

Bible Study- Bible study will begin on Feb 19th at 10:30 AM each Sunday through April 2nd. This Bible study will be on Jesus' final days, Based on the Book "*Entering the Passion of Jesus*" by Prof. Amy-Jill Levine. Every move he made was filled with anticipation, danger, and the potential for great loss or great reward. Jesus risked his reputation when he entered Jerusalem in a victory parade. He risked his life when he dared to teach in the Temple. His followers risked everything when they left behind their homes, or anointed him with costly perfume. We take risks as we read and re-read these stories, finding new meanings and new challenges. In *Entering the Passion of Jesus*, author, professor, and biblical scholar Amy-Jill Levine explores the biblical texts surrounding the Passion story. She shows us how the text raises ethical and spiritual questions for the reader, and how we all face risk in our Christian experience. Books are available in the Church Office for \$15.00.

Men's Group- The Men's group will begin again on Thursday, Jan 9th at 6 PM in room A.

LIFT- ALL LADIES ARE INVITED to meet for lunch and relaxation with our Ladies in Fellowship Together group. Dates are as follows:

- **Saturday, February 11 - Liberty Restaurant in Peru at 11:00 am.**
For a complete list of upcoming L.I.F.T events, you can visit our website gracelasalle.com

Chancel Choir- New chancel choir members are welcome throughout the year. We rehearse and perform on the second and third Sundays of each month. Practice is at 8 AM.

Change for Change: Thank you for the January contributions of \$43.00. Keep saving those coins!

PADS: Thank you to Trudy Forkner, Mary Landsiedel, Barb Marusich and Leann Wilcoxen for providing the January PADS meal of Chicken Casserole, Potatoes, Corn, Applesauce, Brownies and Cookies. The February and March meals are covered, but volunteers are needed for the April and May meals. Please contact Lynn Perry lperry72@comcast.net or Diane Davis ddavis8266@hotmail.net.

Chancel Choir- New chancel choir members are welcome throughout the year. We rehearse and perform on the second and third Sundays of each month. Practice is at 8 AM.

Shut In's- If you know of a shut-in that would like to receive Communion, please contact the office at gracelasallechurch@gmail.com or 815-223-1001

Bibles- If you are in need of a Bible of your own, we have Bibles available for you in the Tech Booth.

Missions: Another way to help those in need is to donate to P.A.D.S, 1320 Menards Ave, Peru 61354; Illinois Valley Food Pantry, 122 Wright St. LaSalle 61301; and the Hall Township Food Pantry, 500 N. Terry St., Spring Valley 61362. Thank you for your generosity and the way you care about the people in the Illinois Valley.

Shut In's- How about sending a greeting to one of Grace UMC's shut-ins? If you know of anyone else that should be included on this list or of any corrections, please contact Leann Wilcoxen at llwilcoxen@comcast.net or 815-223-1143

Edna Davis- Liberty Village 1101 31st St. Peru IL 61354

Dick Graff - 505 College Ave, Ottawa, IL 61350

Arnold & Marla Zolli - 52 Sandy Dr. Spring Valley, IL 61362

Harold & Mary Fran Walter - 259 N 2559th Rd Peru, IL 61354

Myrtle Hitchens- 1815 N Towando Barnes Rd. Apt 15, Bloomington, IL 61705

Prayer Chain - If you would like to be a part of the Prayer Chain, Please contact Nancy Leonard at nancyleeahall38@gmail.com.

Bright Futures Start At...

Summit Learning Academy

Things have been going great here at Summit. We are now in the 2nd semester of the year. On January 18th, we had L.E.A.S.E come to Summit and test/assess our student's ages 3 and up. This test is done individually which helps teachers and parents identify any concern or issue within the child. We will have day 2 of testing on February 15th. We also did our Popcorn sale

fundraiser in which about \$300 was raised for Summit. This month is really a time for planning for the next school year. Here is a couple of the things that we are currently working on:

1. Registration for the 2023-2024 school year. Many of our current families have already registered for the following year which lets us know that they like and trust Summit with the education of their children.
2. Summer camp:: We are full for this year's Summer camp! This will be our 3rd year doing summer camp and we are excited to continue to get the support of families and again thankful that they entrust us with their children.
3. We are currently in the process of looking for a new teacher for the 2023-2024 school year. We are looking to expand our classroom as we have a big waiting list for our 3-year-old classrooms.

For this month, there are 2 special weeks that we take part in. One is Valentine's Day celebrations in which we celebrate friendship by having individual class parties. Two, dental health week in which we focus on the importance of taking care of our teeth. We will also be having Grandparent's Breakfast on February 10th, in which students have donuts and milk/coffee with their grandparents AND they get to go to our book fair after. Summit gets some great book benefits as part of the total that is sold at this book fair. We look forward to this month and we can't wait to enjoy these special days with our kiddos!

Abigail Cervantes – Director



February

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 2. Mallorie Miller | 16. Steve Opsal |
| 5. Mark Whiting | 22. Ginny Kochanowski |
| 6. John McCormick | 24. Tina Hardy |
| Lynn Perry | 25. Bonnie Smyth |
| Ryan Donovan | 28. Ray Locati |
| 7. Lois Sheaff | . |
| 8. Mary Fran Walter | |
| 13. Don Huling | |



Grace United Methodist Church
1345 Chartres Street
LaSalle, IL 61301

Recipient Name

Street Address

City, ST ZIP Code